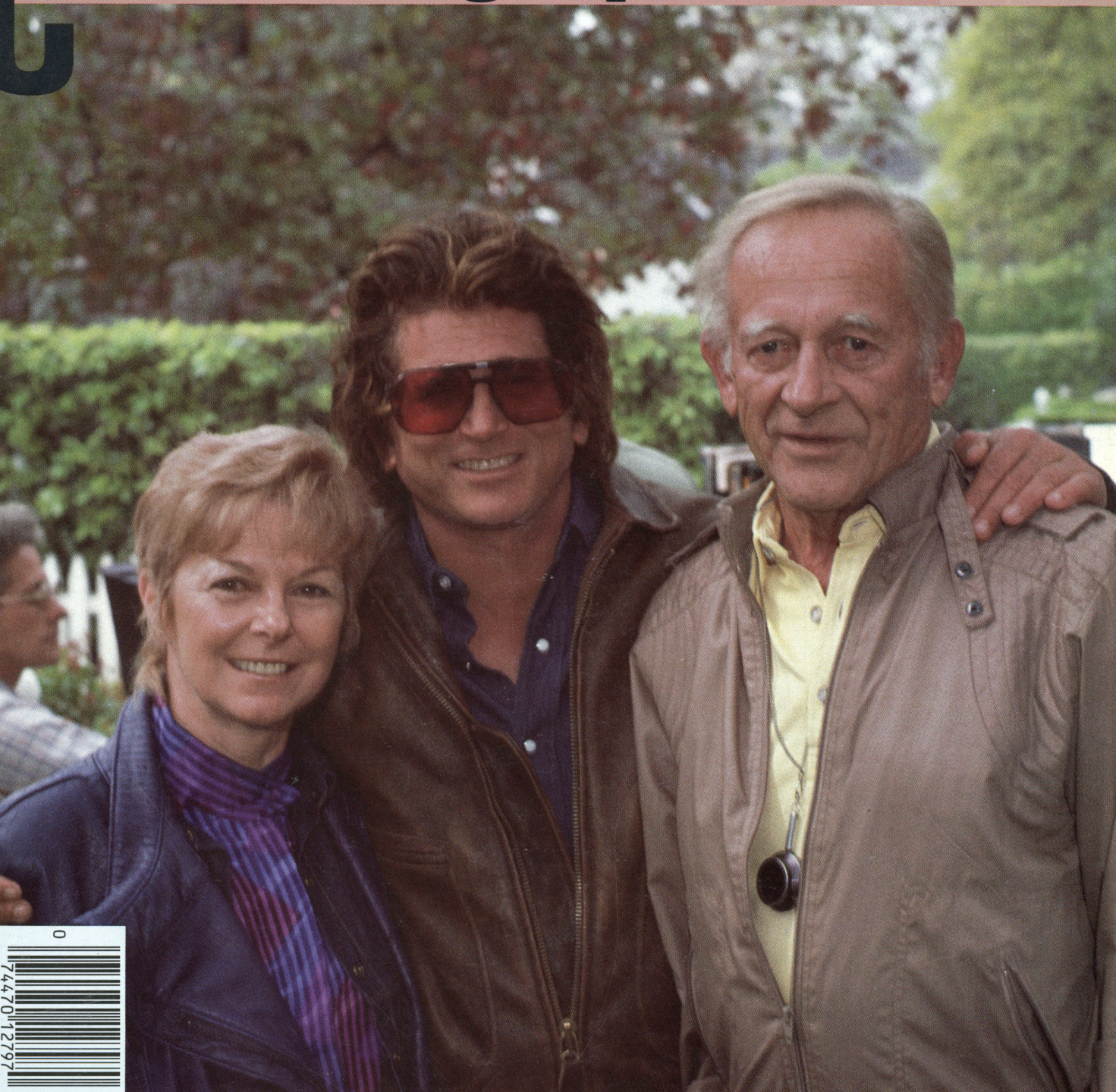


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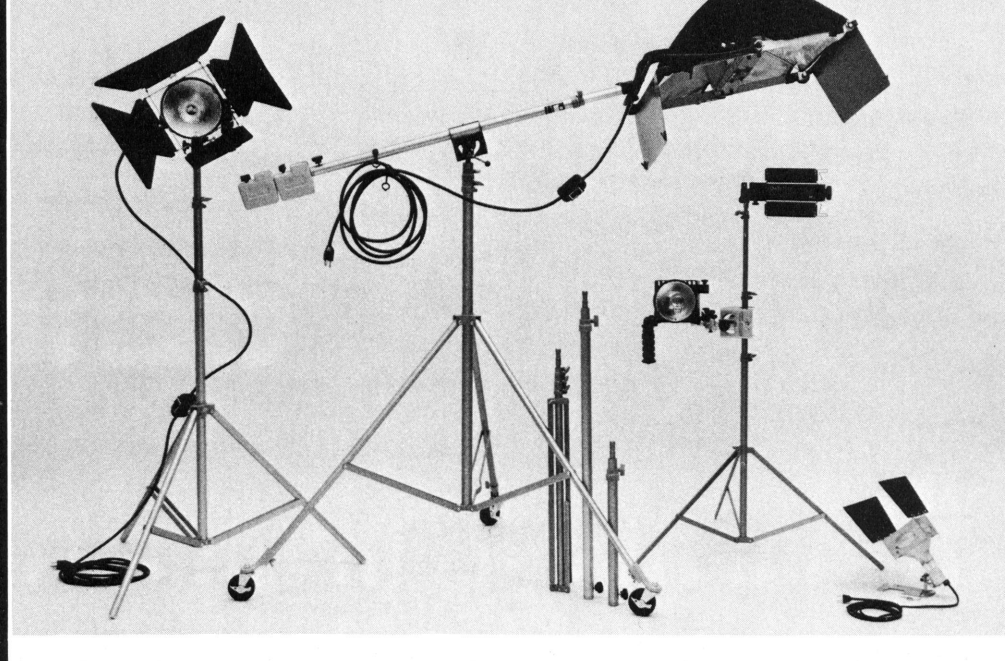
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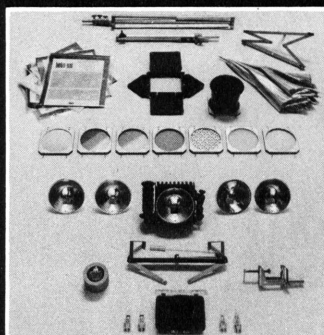
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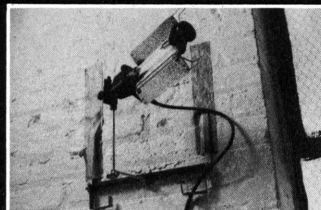
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Features

- 30 *Lost Horizon*—A Timeless Journey
Movie history in an ice house
- 42 Phil Tippet's Dinosaurs
Bringing new life to the 'terrible lizards'
- 50 Voigtlander and Murphy on *Highway to Heaven*
Two cinematographers keep production values high

Award Nominees



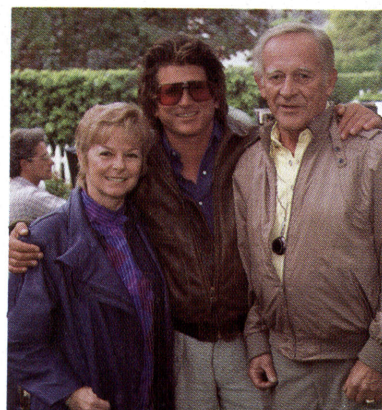
- 66 *Ran*, Takao Saito, Masaharu Ueda and Asakazu Nakai
- 74 *Witness*, John Seale, ACS
- 80 *The Color Purple*, Allen Daviau, ASC
- 84 *Out of Africa*, David Watkin
- 88 *Murphy's Romance*, William A. Fraker, ASC
- 92 1985 Visual Effects Nominations



Departments

- 103 Engineering
Scientific or Technical Awards
- 107 Film
Castle in Italy Is Seminar
- 113 Camera
Production Atmosphere for *Miami Vice*

- 10 Letters
- 14 New Products
- 26 The Bookshelf
- 98 From the Clubhouse
- 120 Classified Ads
- 125 In Memoriam
- 128 The Last Page

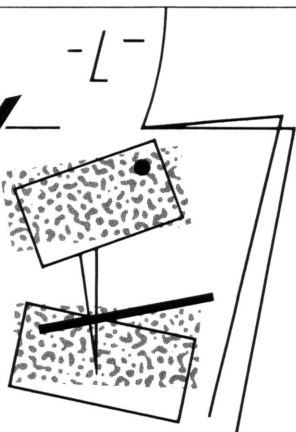


On Our Cover:
Brienne Murphy, ASC;
Michael Landon and Tom
Voigtlander, *Highway to
Heaven* angelic trio.
(Photo by Gene Trindle)

Dave Knox

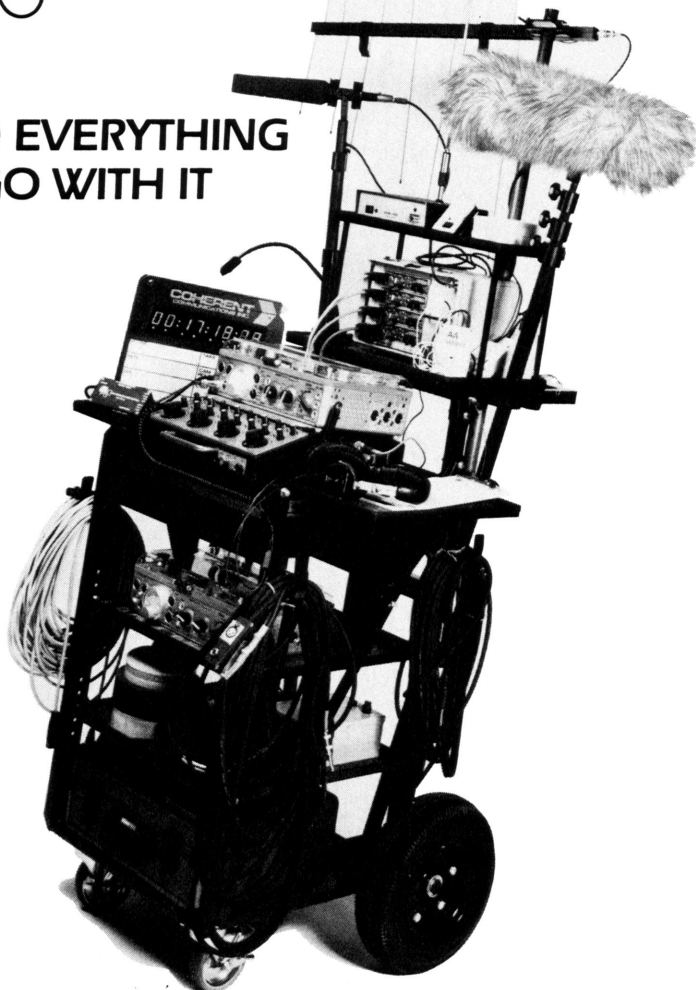
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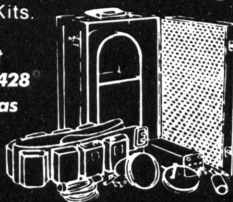
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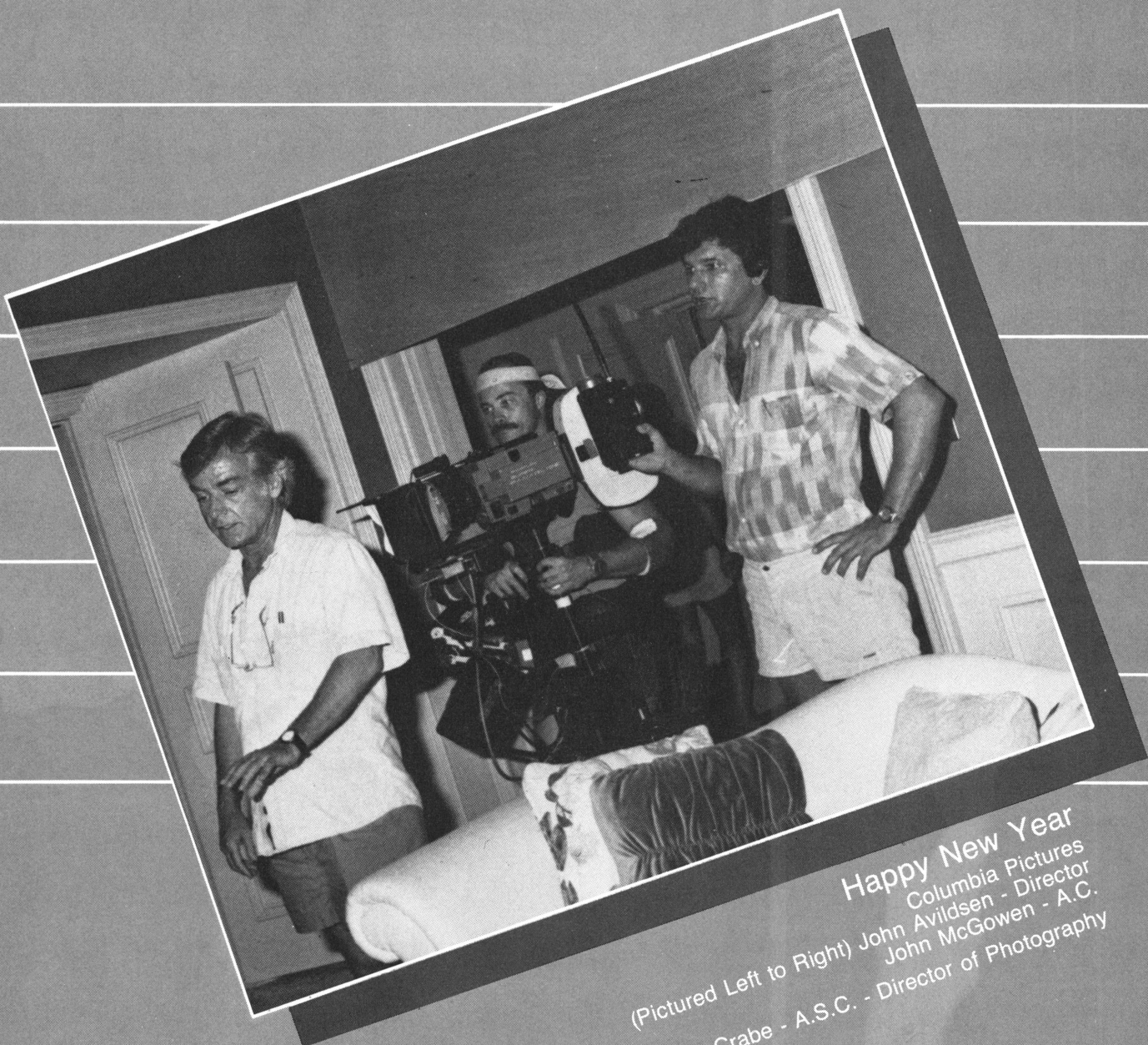
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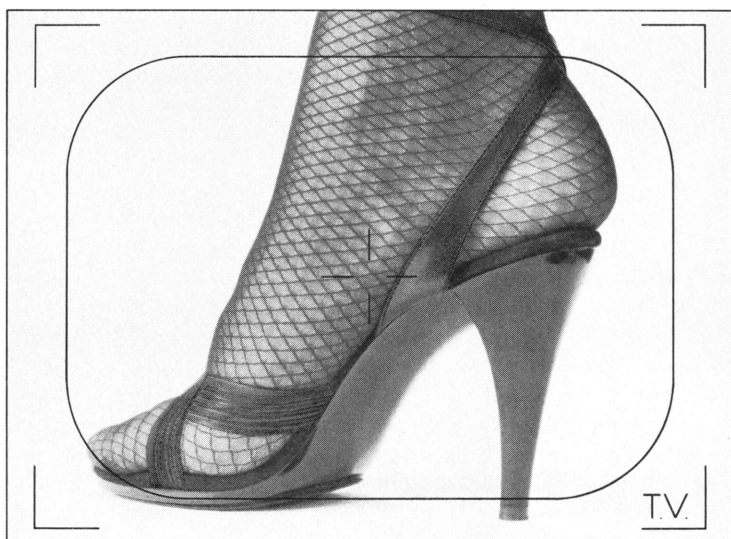
**Lens is nine inches above floor
but you can see under the shoe**

In this photo, bottom of Low Angle Prism's housing is about one quarter inch above floor. Camera lens mount is nine inches above floor. Zeiss 24mm T2.1 is focussed on woman's foot. Lens is set at

fourteen inches; foot is about five inches from front of Low Angle Prism. With Arriflex long viewfinder, eyepiece is twenty-nine inches above floor. Photo on opposite page shows what you see through Prism.

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The Prism image is right way up and correct left-to-right. No measurable light

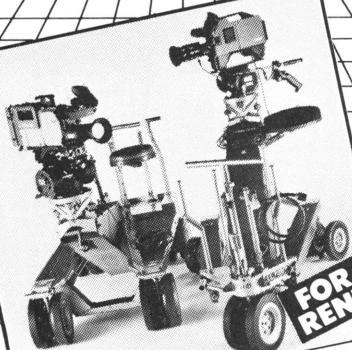
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Parting the Sea

I have an issue of *American Cinematographer* that is dated November 1956. Starting on page 659, is an article called, "Cinematography Unsurpassed." (Filming of Cecil B. DeMille's - *The Ten Commandments* - rated the biggest photographic undertaking of all time.) By Arthur Rowan. In this article he goes on to explain how this picture was photographed. At the end of the article on bound page 682 and I quote;

"This phase of the production was a major undertaking in itself - said to be the largest ever involved in a Hollywood motion picture - and worthy of a story all its own. (Which we plan for an early issue. - ED.)"

My question to you is; was this "story" ever written in a later issue? If you don't know, is there a way for me to contact Arthur Rowan - who was the author of this article? I realize this is a difficult request. After all the article is now 30 years old.

I have accomplished some extensive research on this motion picture for the past five years. If this article can be located it would be of utmost help to me.

—Thank you.

Steve I. Willhite
South Bend, Indiana

Please refer to *American Cinematographer*, April, 1983.

FPS Myth

Your articles in *American Cinematographer* have been splendid. I greatly enjoyed the latest, on Linwood Dunn. But you have to solve the enigma of the 16 fps myth. I am convinced you were quoting him accurately, because every cameraman I've ever talked to insists they cranked at 16 fps.

They didn't.

And the theatres certainly didn't show the films at 16 fps. We

have just presented *The Big Parade* with live orchestra at a big West End theatre and we found that 21 fps was the ideal speed, with a drop to 19 for some of the action. (It ran at 23 in 1925!)

It is a quandary. The worst aspect of it is that film societies and universities, in their anxiety to do right by the silent films, show them at 16 or 18 - whichever is the 'silent' speed on the 16mm projectors, and kill them stone dead. When they ran *Napoleon* at NYU recently, the 'structuralist' in charge switched off the sound track and ran it at a relentless 16!

Anyhow, I would be most interested in your reaction.

—Kevin Brownlow
London

Perhaps our readers will comment.

Rain and Wind

In the article "Where are the Children? - a dark tale" (Feb. 1986) there is a brief discussion of the benefits of fabricating wind machines and rain towers over shipping them in from New York or L.A. Unfortunately, a third possibility, that might have benefited both the production and our company, was evidently overlooked: renting locally.

Blake Films, in Boston, added rain and wind machines to its inventory in 1980 in an attempt to control New England's uncontrollable weather. We carry an assortment of wind machines that sound almost identical to the ones Chesney described, and our rain towers could have been adapted to production's needs with a minimum of time and materials.

—Nathan P. Gendzier
Boston, MA



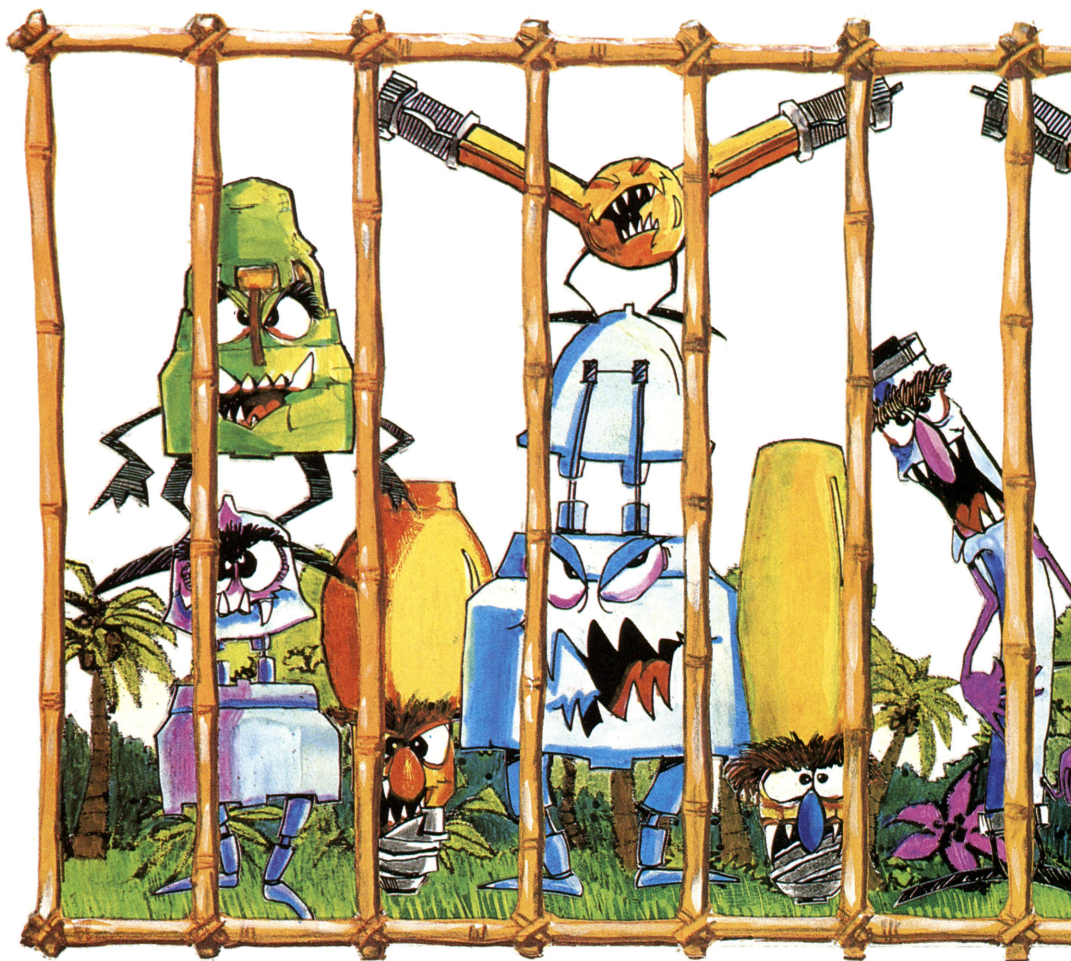
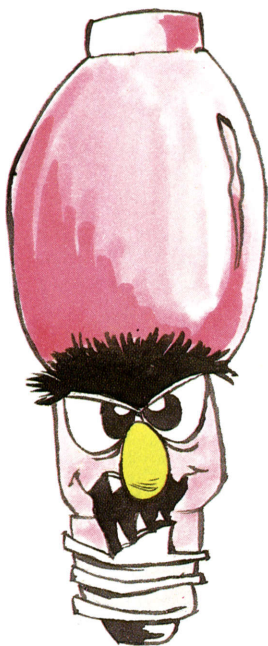
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Then suddenly, a whole new generation of efficient new lights appeared. Every location had its own brand of lighting monsters. From energy-efficient fluorescent lights in office buildings, to various breeds of discharge lamps lighting streets and shopping malls. They created a new set of problems for the cinematographer and gaffer.

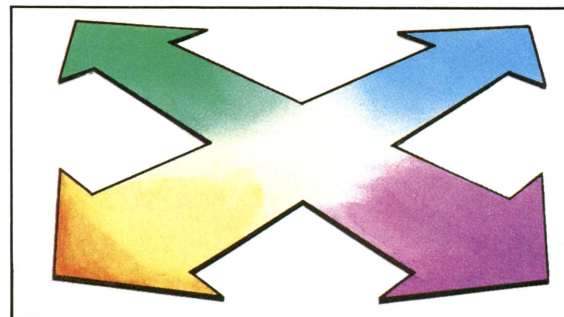
For film emulsions and video, the output of these powerful new "white" lights varies across the spectrum from blue-green to orange. To complicate matters more, most of them shift as they go from burn-in to burn-out and some vary as much as 600 degrees Kelvin even when brand new.

Just measuring Kelvin is no longer enough. Between the Mired Shift from amber to blue, and the Color Compensation to adjust the green, balancing the lighting in a tough location has turned into a monstrous task.

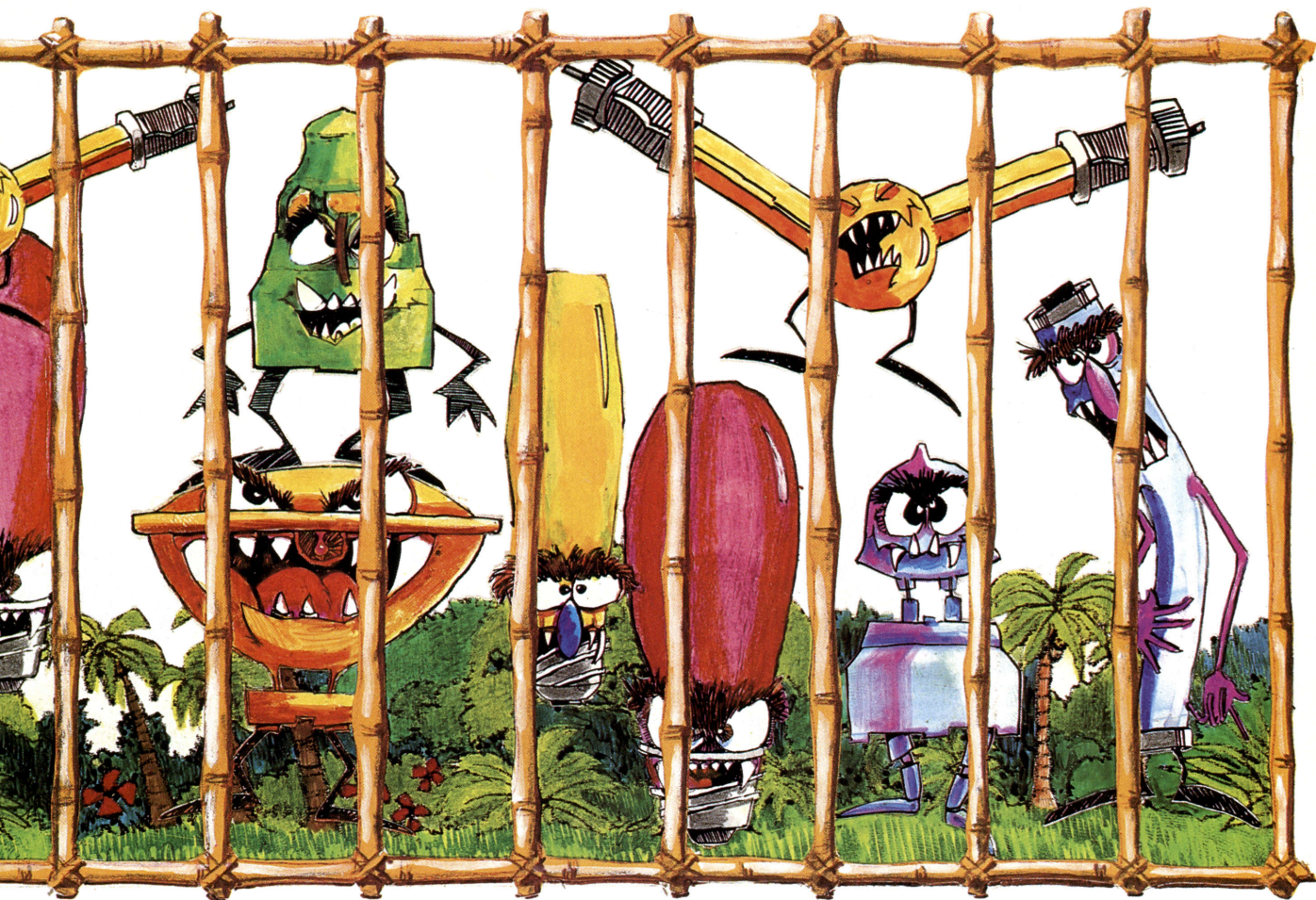
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Armed with a little information, a handful of light control filters, and a good color meter, you can control virtually any light you encounter. Here, briefly, how the Rosco system works:

Measure the Kelvin temperature (LB scale) of the light and find the blue or amber Rosco filter that gives you the Kelvin adjustment you need.



With the increased use of discharge sources, the problem of Kelvin correction has become a two-dimensional problem: lighting balancing for Kelvin on the blue-amber scale AND color correcting on the green-magenta scale. The new Rosco system handles both.



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The technical information you'll need is in Rosco's new "Lighting The Jungle" Handbook and the Rosco "Jungle Book" swatchbook for location lighting. Both are yours free, for the asking.

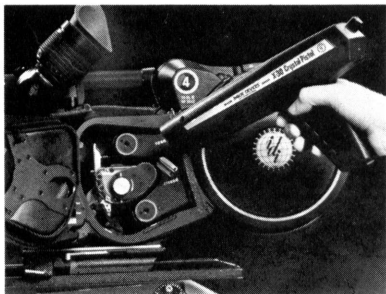


There are 20 meter-sized swatches in carefully graded steps of blue, amber, green and magenta in the new Rosco "Jungle Book". They let you correct any light to any standard you set. The swatchbook is free from Rosco or your rental house.

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New Products



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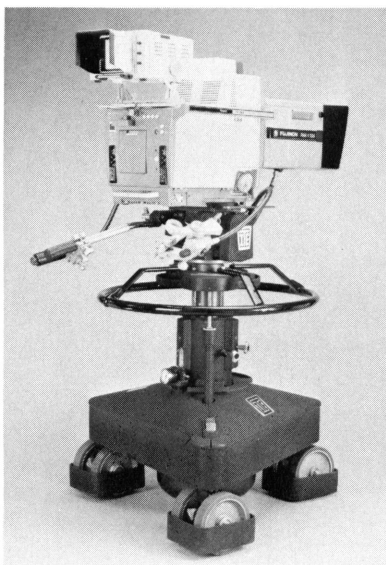
IDI has redesigned its Crystal Pistol frame rate verification device to meet today's production demands. The new Crystal Pistol X-30 model consists of a Xenon flash tube and power supply triggered by crystal-controlled timing electronics.

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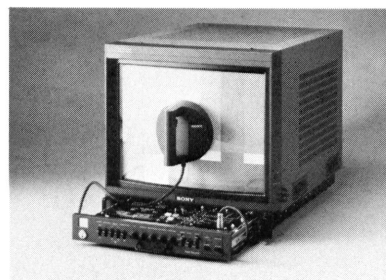
Pneumatic Studio Pedestal

Innovative Television Equipment (ITE) announces the introduction of the latest addition to the company's line of professional studio pedestals – the new ITE-P2 "lowboy" pneumatic studio pedestal, designed to accommodate camera/head loads up to 290 lbs. (130 kgs).

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For further information, contact Innovative Television Equipment, 6445 DeSoto Avenue, Woodland Hills, California 91367. (818) 888-9421.



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For further information, contact Sony Broadcast Products, Park Ridge, NJ 07656. (201) 930-6432.

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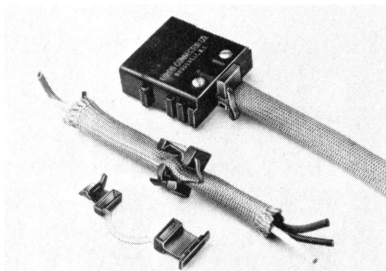
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Holz-It is economically priced and available in bags of 50, 100, or 500. For more information contact the Union Connector Co., Inc. 149 Babylon Turnpike, Roosevelt, NY 11575; Tele: (516) 623-7461.



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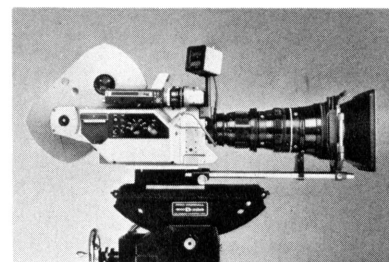
In keeping with the large range of motion picture accessories available from Optex, the company has recently announced the availability of two new items for the 16mm format Cooke Varo Kinetal zoom lenses 9/50 and 10.4/52 Super 16mm lens.

The first item is a new lightweight rectangular sunshade with detachable French Flag. The sunshade accepts two filter holders which, de-

pending on the filter frames purchased, can be either 4x4, 4x6, 3x3 or Series 9/3x3 combination frames. When the sunshade is used on the Cooke Varo Kinetal, a 90/83mm step down ring is required. Step down rings for other makes of lenses are available ie: Zeiss T2 10/100 or the new Zeiss high speed prime lenses which have an outside diameter of 80mm.

The second item is an X2 range extender. With only a loss of two stops the extender converts the Cooke Varo Kinetal 9/50 to 18/100 making it suitable for use on 35mm cameras. If this combination is used with the Panspheron wide angle attachment the user will achieve an extremely wide angle 35mm compact zoom lens ranging from 10.8mm to 60mm.

For more sales information please contact Optex, 22-26 Victoria Rd., New Barnet, Herts EN4, 9PF, UK.



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Cinema Products Corporation announce the CP35-E, tailored to the needs of the special effects filmmaker.

The hand-held CP35-E 35mm camera is capable of speeds up to 120 fps, forward or reverse, with dual-pin registration. It is the only modern camera currently being sold which provides rock-steady images at all speeds when referenced to an optical printer.

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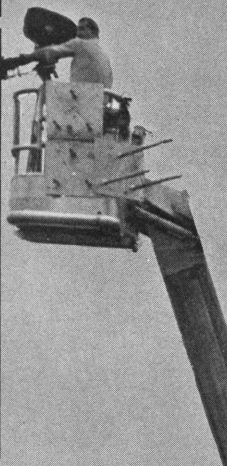
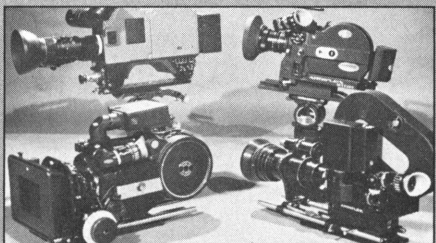
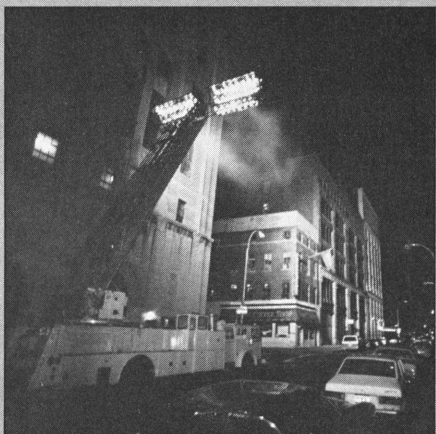
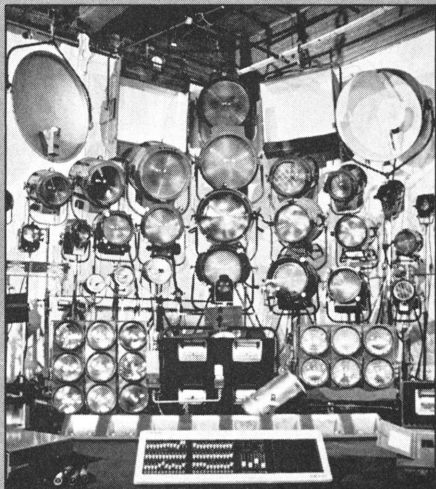
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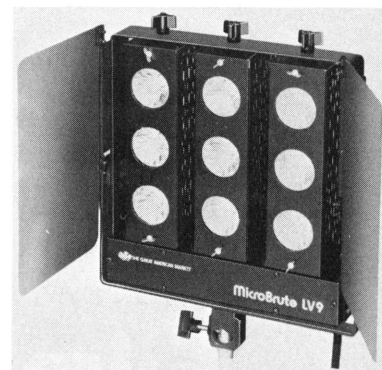
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pulse frame, shutter open/close and forward/reverse, the CP35-E feeds back to the computer; status information, alarms, shutter quadrature and digital tech quadrature. A bare bones model of the CP35-E is also available on an O.E.M. basis to motion control systems manufacturers.

For more information, contact Cinema Products Corporation, 2037 Granville Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025 - Telephone (213) 478-0711.



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A high efficiency miniature 9-light, MicroBrute LV9, has been introduced by The Great American Market. Utilizing cool beam MR-16 lamps, the MicroBrute LV9 features high intensity, high color temperature (3150°K) and long lamp life in a lightweight, super slim package.

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For further information and photometric data, contact The Great American Market, 826 N. Cole Ave., Hollywood CA 90038; telephone (213) 461-0200.

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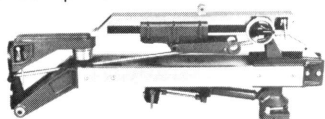
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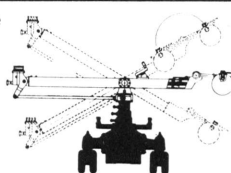
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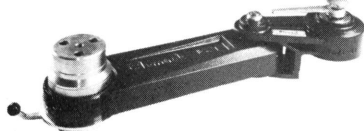
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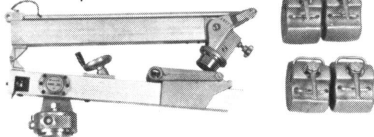
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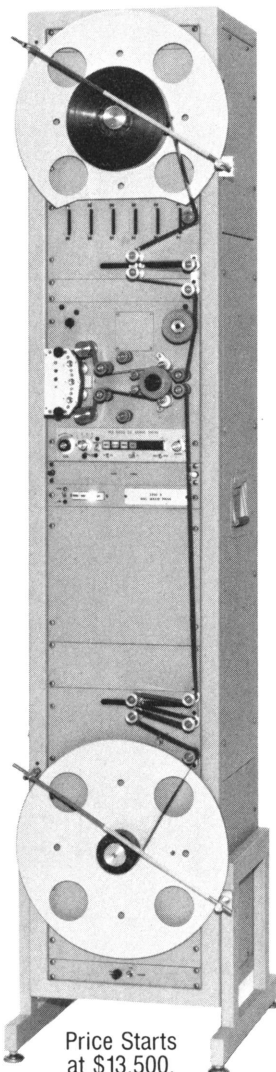
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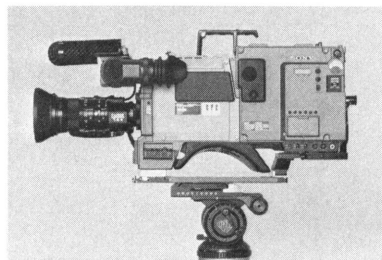
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The Bettermount for Beta is being supplied by Broadcast Video Rentals, Ltd., (BVR). Designed as a positive lock camera mounting system for the Sony Betacam models BVW-3, BVW-3A, BVW-30 as well as the BVP-3, BVP-3A and BVP-30 ENG/EPF cameras, the Bettermount made its debut at the 127th SMPTE Technical Conference and Equipment Exhibit last fall.

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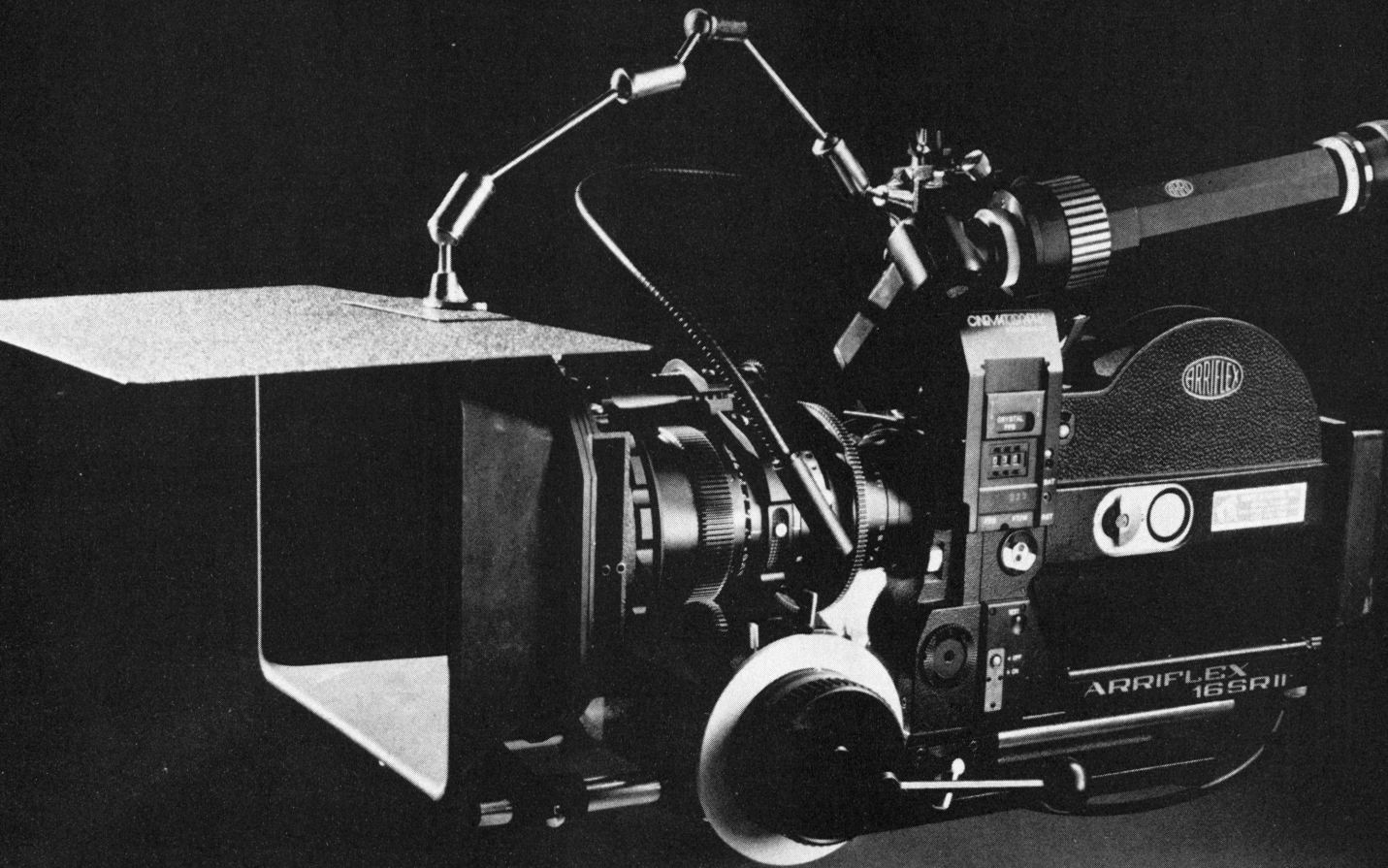
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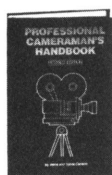
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The Bookshelf

by George L. George

An autobiography that Charlie Chaplin wrote in 1916 and quickly withdrew has been rediscovered by Harry M. Geduld. **Charlie Chaplin's Own Story**, while palpably fictionalized, appears accurate in spirit if not in detail and well worth readers' attention. Now in paperback, Julian Smith's **Chaplin** is a scholarly study of cinema as a one-man show (*Indiana U. Press, Bloomington, IN, \$20; G.K. Hall, Boston, \$7.95*).

Making a \$24 million movie of Broadway's longest-running musical is chronicled by the film's director in **Richard Attenborough's Chorus Line**. This is an engaging book whose format echoes that of the film with dancers speaking candidly about their lives and their roles (*NAL/Plume, NYC, \$9.95*).

William Faulkner's 1943 MGM screenplay, **Battle Cry**, is an epic cavalcade of WWII episodes. Its projected \$4 million cost caused its cancellation, but the script remains a dynamic example of Faulkner's creative writing. A fictionalized version of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical research, **Nineteen Nineteen**, scripted by Hugh Brody and Michael Ignatieff and directed by Brody, delves affectingly into memory and reality. Michelangelo Antonioni's **That Bowling Alley on the Tiber** is a series of "narrative nuclei" for possible use in future films (*U. Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS, \$35; Faber & Faber, Boston, \$7.95; Oxford U. Press, NYC, \$18.95*).

A celebration of the visual style that pervaded Hollywood movies of the 20s and 30s, **Screen Deco** by Howard Mandelbaum and Eric Myer surveys in some 200 photos and an informative text the dazzling decor of art director Cedric Gibbons' opulent interiors, DeMille's gleaming marble bath-

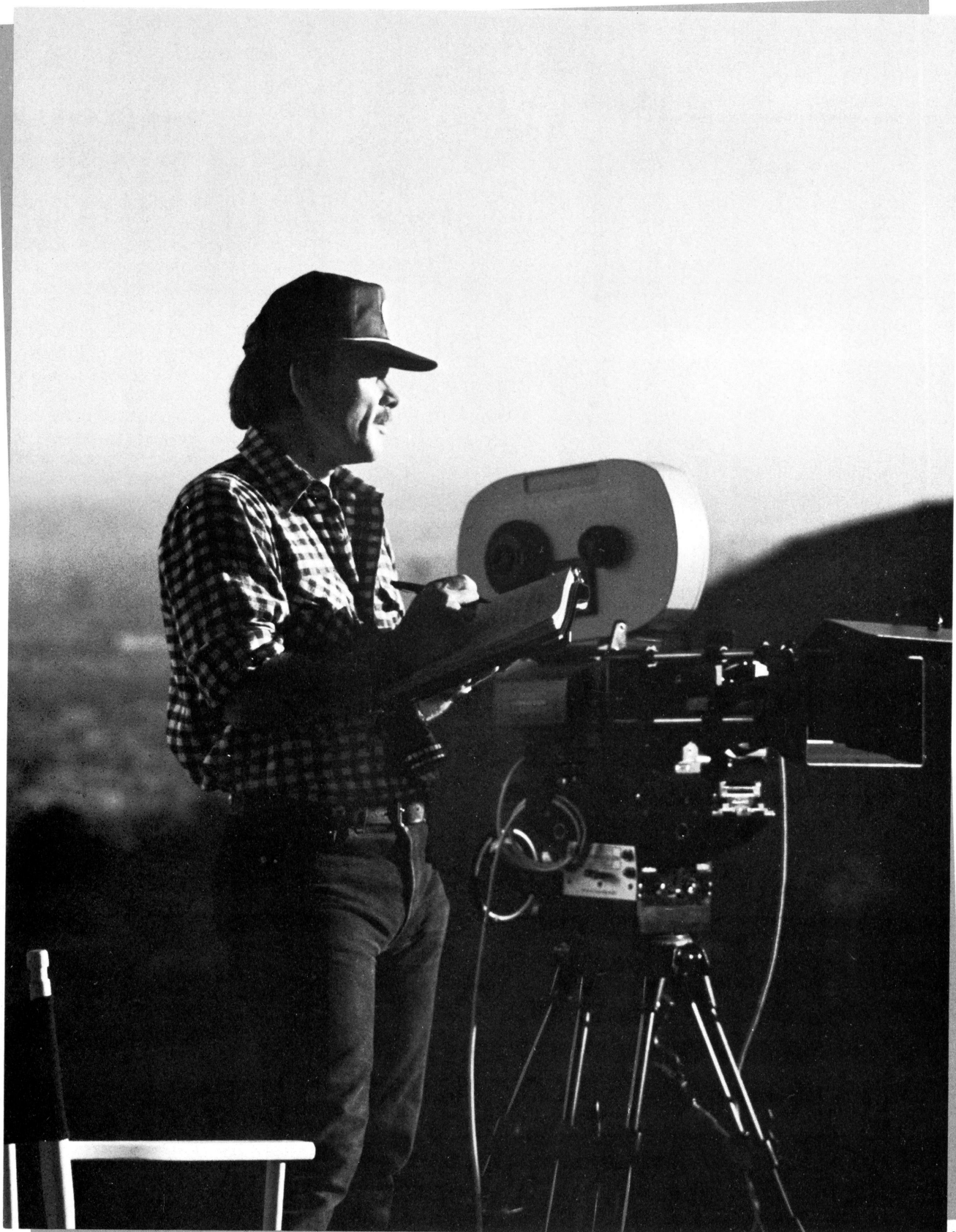
rooms and Busby Berkeley's spectacular settings (*St. Martin's Press, NYC, \$24.95*).

Film critic Roger Ebert, with VCR owners in mind, has compiled in **Movie Home Companion** reviews of some 400 films on cassette of the 1980-85 period. His assessments are perceptive, witty and refreshingly challenging. In a companion book of interviews with stars, **A Kiss Is Still A Kiss**, Ebert's low-key approach and ear for the telling detail manages to get answers even to unasked questions (*Andrews, McMeel, Parker, Kansas City, KS, \$9.95 and \$8.95*).

Viewing films as an alternate form of literature, Joy Gould Borum, in her penetrating study **Double Exposure**, points to the movie adaptations of *Tess*, *Clockwork Orange* and other novels as examples of sensitive and faithful translations to the screen. As another instance of film's literary connections, Dale and Doug Fetherling reprint, in **Carl Sandburg at the Movies**, the poet's movie reviews for the *Chicago Daily News*, incisive appraisals of cinema art of 1920-27 vintage (*NAL/Plume, NYC, \$10.95 and Universe, NYC, \$19.95. Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ, \$16.50*).

In **Movie and Methods** (Vol. 2), thoughtful studies by scholars and film critics assess the input of various disciplines into the evolution of film theories. Editor Bill Nichols aptly introduces the often divergent contributions and provides a knowledgeable link between conflicting points of view (*U. of California Press, Berkeley, \$32.50*).

In **S.J. Perelman: An Annotated Bibliography**, Steven H. Gale organizes a comprehensive listing of Perelman's literary work, notably his contribution to such movies as the Marx Bros. *Monkey Business* and *Horse-*



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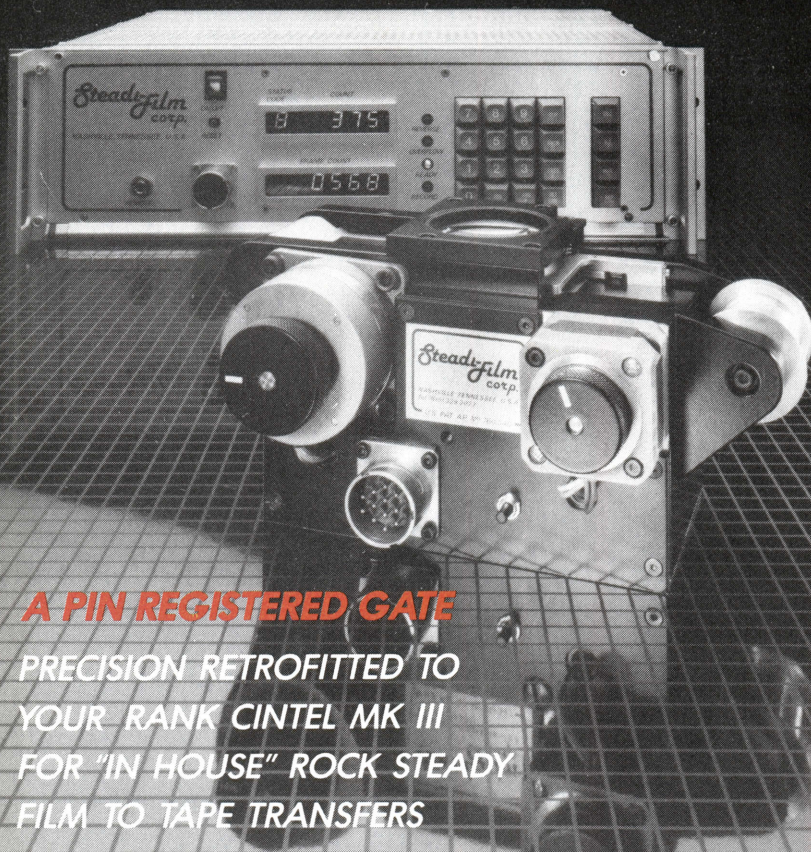
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feathers. Britain's Ezic Slater's own experience with Perelman and other entertainment figures is delightfully evoked in **Don't Mention the Marx Bros.**, a standard Perelman quip to forestall persistent prying (*Garland, NYC, \$26; Merrimack, Salem, NH, \$12.95*).

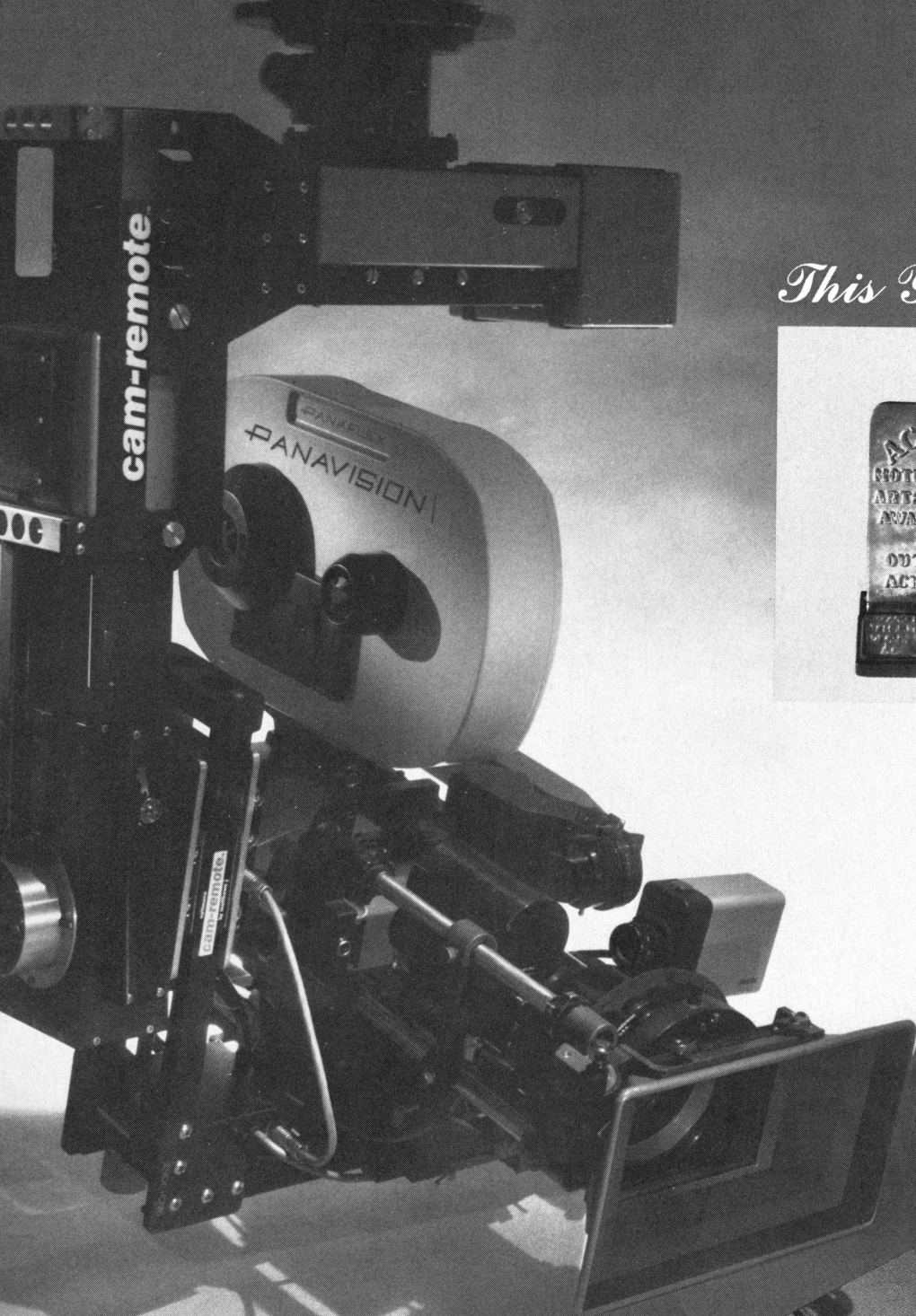
Donald Spoto's lively pictorial biography of the legendary Marlene Dietrich, **Falling In Love Again**, tastefully combines an array of superb photographs with a spirited chronicle of her life and career, stressing her impact on our perceptions of woman's role in society (*Little Brown, NYC, \$19.95*).

A well-rounded portrait of Steve McQueen emerges from two complementary biographies. In **My Husband, My Friend**, first wife Neile McQueen Toffel offers an intimate memoir of his childhood hardships, his insecure machismo, his relentless womanizing, his tragic death from cancer, but also the love she never renounced. Penina Spiegel's **McQueen**, a compelling portrayal based on extensive interviews, details his screen career and his private life in a vivid and entertaining style (*Atheneum, NYC, \$17.95; Doubleday, NYC, \$17.95*).

In **Hollywood Babylon II**, now in paperback, Kenneth Anger updates but dishes out most of the same gossip that created a scandal when originally published in 1960. Photos are catchy, especially some eye-popping Joan Crawford poses. On the whole, what's interesting is not new and what's new is not interesting (*NAL/Plume, NYC, \$12.95*).

Movie star memoirs have been deftly excerpted in **Bedside Hollywood**. Selecting the juicier passages, editors Robert Atwan and Bruce Forer reprint such intimate indiscretions as Joan Crawford's (again!) dalliance with a juvenile Jackie Cooper, Olivier's special coaching of Marilyn Monroe, Errol Flynn's bedroom and courtroom capers, and 40 other no less piquant tidbits (*Moyer Bell, Mt. Kisco, NY, \$24.95*).

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Lost Horizon—a Timeless Journey

by Sam Frank

LIKE MOST WRITERS who eventually become celebrated authors, British-born James Hilton struggled for years to make a name for himself. Success finally came with "Goodbye Mr. Chips" in 1933, but only after the publication of eight books, including "Lost Horizon," which was a commercial failure initially.

"Lost Horizon" became a best seller in America in 1935, two years after publication, as a result of Alexander Woolcott's going "quietly mad" over the book on his CBS radio show, "The Town Crier." The story concerns a minor British

consul, Hugh Conway, and three other people who are hijacked from a rebellion in China to a lost valley in Tibet called Shangri-La. There the inhabitants grow to be impossibly old and the cream of mankind's cultural heritage is preserved in a utopian monastery. The High Lama, a Belgian priest named Perrault, is looking for someone to take his place as overseer of Shangri-La's legacy. Conway is that someone, a closet mystic who senses a kinship with all that Shangri-La stands for. But his hot-tempered subordinate, Mallinson (actually, in the film the character is

Conway's younger brother), falls in love with a seemingly young and fragile Manchu woman named Lo-Tsen who also wants to leave. Mallinson persuades Conway to give up his new-found life. Away from Shangri-La, Lo-Tsen reverts to her real age of 64 and dies. The amnesiac Conway, while being returned to England, regains his memory. He disappears as the ship docks, determined to return to Shangri-La.

Best-sellers usually end up on the screen, but this one was made of ingredients unlikely to ensure boxoffice success – fantasy, philosophy, introspection.

The studio seemingly least likely to film *Lost Horizon* was Columbia, a former Poverty Row outfit at the heart of Gower Gulch. The president was the burly, tactless Harry Cohn, specialist in making low-budget potboilers since 1924.

Cohn and Columbia might have continued in this profitable but artless direction forever but for an ebullient Italian named Frank Capra, who was the living embodiment of the Horatio Alger rags-to-riches stories. Capra came from an impoverished immigrant family and had worked his way through school, earning a degree in chemical engineering from Caltech.

Capra came to Columbia by way of a stint with Mack Sennett as a gag man and directing two popular feature comedies starring Harry Langdon: *The Strong Man* (1926) and *Long Pants* (1927). His movies at Columbia during his first four years there were characterized by fast pacing, strong storylines and solid craftsmanship. It wasn't until he started making talking pictures in a populist vein that Capra made a name for himself.

Much of the success of these movies was due to a soft-spoken New Yorker named Robert Riskin, a former Broadway playwright whose forte was snappy, street-smart dialogue. They met when Riskin was assigned to write the dialogue for a Jean Harlow movie Capra was directing called *Platinum Blonde* (1931), which became a hit. Capra was as impressed with Riskin as a person as he was with the man's obvious gift for writing. They became fast friends as well as collaborators.

Platinum Blonde set the tone for the earthy, working class social comedies for which the Capra-Riskin team would become famous.

This run of commercial successes made Capra the top director at Columbia, giving him the clout to make the movies he wanted with little or no interference. Ironically, it was Cohn who provided the catalyst for making *Lost Horizon* when he invited Capra to attend a USC-Stanford football game in Palo Alto in October of 1935.

The idea was to spend a relaxed weekend away from preparing *Mr. Deeds* for production. At the Union Station newsstand, Capra bought a hardcover copy of the Hilton novel. That night he read the book and dreamed about it.



Photos by Alfred Keller, ASC, and Irving Lippman

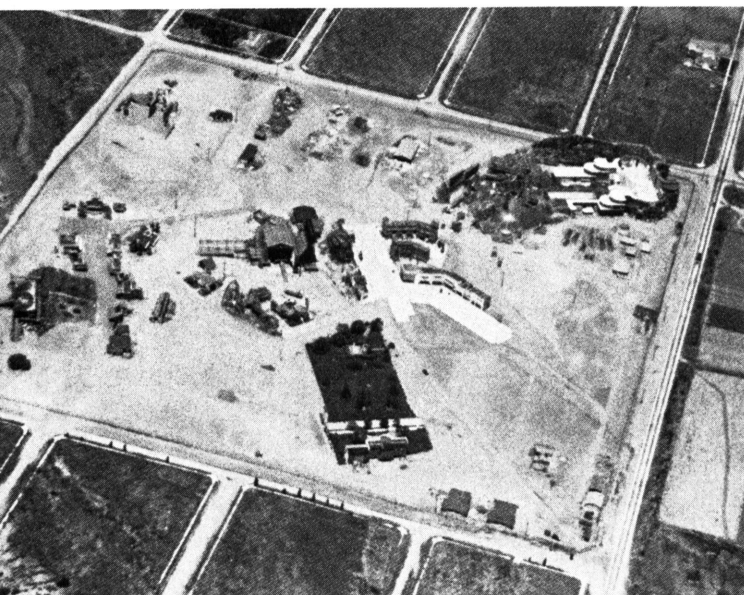
Capra showed the book to Cohn next morning in the train's dining car, telling the mogul it would be the next Capra movie after *Deeds*, would star Ronald Colman, and would probably cost \$2 million.

Cohn hit the roof (most Columbia movies at the time cost \$100,000 apiece with *It Happened One Night* and *Deeds* being their most expensive at a combined total of \$750,000), but agreed to finance pre-production work on *Lost Horizon* and *Deeds* simultaneously. Preparing two movies at once was quite a burden on Capra, but the sort of double load he thrived on.

Capra and Bob Riskin settled in at the La Quinta Hotel near Indio, California in November of 1935 to plot the script and plan production values.

Capra quickly discovered that the world's foremost authority on Tibet was an explorer-writer-photographer named Harrison Forman, who had come to national attention with *Life* magazine articles and a best-selling book about his travels called *Through Forbidden Tibet*. When Capra learned that Forman had returned to the states from his latest trip with trunkfuls of trinkets and costumes and thousands of photographic negatives depicting the way Tibetans looked and lived, he hired the man at

Shooting at the lake site near Victorville. At left the ground is Fr. Clarke, pilot for film. On the right at left are first assistant camera Alfred Keller and operative camera Victor Sheurich. Director Frank Capra sits on the right parallel and operative camera Roy Babbitt sets the camera. Opposite page: Detail from the poster painting by James Montgomery Flagg.



Columbia Ranch
ranch, 1936.
Shangri-la
lamasery is under
construction in the
bottom right corner.

once. The Tibetan memorabilia was invaluable for making a filmic Shangri-La authentic-looking to the last detail, and the pictures were a godsend for fine details about set decorations, Tibetan hairstyles and costumes and the layout of a typical Tibetan village.

The construction department had its hands full duplicating religious artifacts, particularly "eight twenty-foot high chortens I had photographed in Kum Bum lamasery. Chortens are mausoleums for the ashes of departed lamas. They look like giant chessmen."

The topper was a full-sized Tibetan village recreated 40 miles from Hollywood at Lake Sherwood, known today as Westlake Village. In 1936 it was isolated acreage with a natural basin that could be used for an artificial lake and level heights that could pass for Tibetan plateaus.

Work on the Tibetan village began on March 1, 1936, with 150 workers spending two months creating a lake, constructing a full-sized log bridge across that lake, erecting primitive houses, and placing hundreds of props, including the chortens. By late April, Sherwood Forest was transformed into Shangri-La's Valley of the Blue Moon, the village below the lamasery, using almost every element Forman had captured in his photos.

The costumes were the work of illustrator Dan Groesbeck. Ernest Dryden, head of the wardrobe department, supervised the making of costumes for the leading players. Costumes for extras supplied by Western Costume Company had to be altered by Forman for desert scenes involving Chinese bandits.

One of Forman's other tasks involving extras was casting Tibetan villagers, a difficult chore because even though Tibet is adjacent to China, Tibetans don't look like Chinese.

At first, Forman cast extras from a group of Oriental types – Chinese, Japanese, Fil-

ipinos, Hawaiians, and Eskimos – because there was a shortage of Tibetan extras at Central Casting. "Then I had a hunch," Forman wrote. Recalling some books he had read about "the probability that the American Indians were descendants from Mongols who wandered northward from their desert home across Siberia," Forman cast the bulk of his natives from a group of Indian extras.

"The call went out for American Indians and I was agreeably surprised by the turn-out. Features, pigmentation, average heights, physiques, and even temperaments were just what I wanted . . . When they actually got into Tibetan costumes, believe me, they looked as if they really belonged in those garments."

While the village was being built, art director Stephen Goosson was overseeing the construction of the lamasery set at Columbia Ranch. His assistants were Columbia veterans Lionel Banks and Paul Murphy. The set drawings were by a new artist at Columbia, Cary Odell. To emphasize Shangri-La's detachment from the real world, Odell based his squared-off art deco design on the work of architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Critics complained, but Capra loved it, feeling it gave his Shangri-La a bold look of fantastic unreality.

"*Lost Horizon* was the beginning of a happy career in the industry," Odell recalls. "I made innumerable sketches, mostly watercolors, of how the sets would look when constructed. The designing of the sets went through a long evolutionary period, starting with the realistic Tibet and ending with the stylized and idealized Shangri-La."

When it was completed, the reported cost of the huge white facade, including the side buildings, was \$250,000 – the budget of two Columbia "quickies." The center facade measured 1,000 feet by 500 feet, one of the largest sets ever constructed for a Hollywood movie.

The lamasery interiors weren't neglected either. What was required was nothing less than the inside of a mansion that looked as though it might belong to Henry Huntington. A library, music rooms, dining room, bedrooms, gigantic hallways and staircases – both straight and spiral – were built to order. Furniture, wall hangings, tableware, paintings, musical instruments and hundreds of sumptuously bound books were gathered. Babs Johnstone, head of interior decorations at Columbia, orchestrated these lavish appointments with an eye to tastefulness and authenticity. What couldn't be rented or borrowed was made to order by an extra department of ten people hired to fashion over 700 props, including those for the lamasery exterior and the village at Lake Sherwood.

One set of props that couldn't be duplicated were the musical instruments, loaned to the production by Henry Eichman, whom Capra described as a "California collector of rare, authentic Tibetan trumpets and horns . . . Some of the trumpets were as long as eight feet; one rare, battered horn

came from the sacred temple of Lhasa." One of these long horns was actually used during the desert refueling sequence.

Besides the full-scale lamasery and its furnishings, a miniature lamasery was constructed by E. Roy Davidson of Columbia's special effects department under the heading of a "special camera effect." It was used twice when the lamasery had to be shown surrounded by mountains, a painting of which was made by artist Alfredo Valente. The matting of the miniature onto the painting – for two five second shots – was coordinated by Davidson with the help of Ganahl Carson.

The job of creating an authentic-looking Shangri-La and populace was a thorough one, except for the yaks and horses. "To badly simulate yaks," Capra writes, "we covered yearling steers with long-haired, hoof-length blankets. To better simulate small Tibetan horses, we 'haired-up' the legs and chests of Shetland ponies."

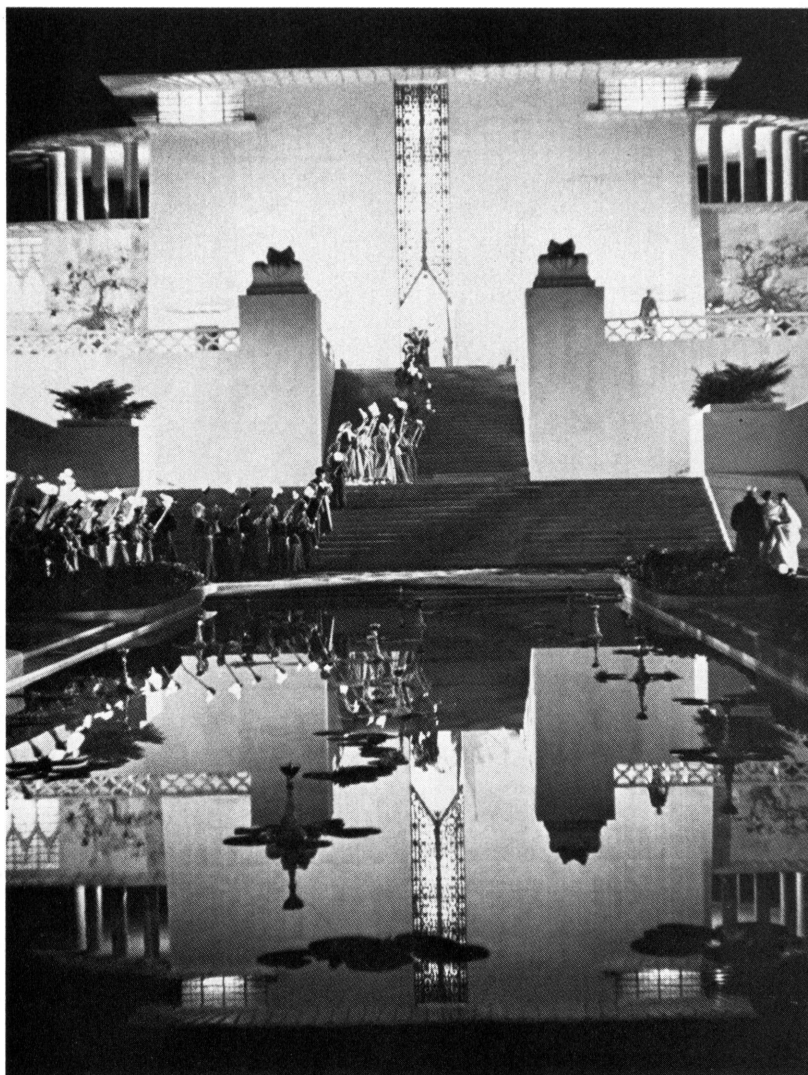
While Capra and Forman were taking care of the milieu for *Lost Horizon*, Riskin was laboring at its drama. Acting on instinct – and with collaborative help from Capra – he overhauled the basic story so that the characters and their motivations would be more convincing and sharply defined, making the movie's utopian theme more compelling. Riskin improved upon the novel. He imbued its worldly idealism with sorely needed warmth, humor, adventure and romance, *and* with a great deal more spiritual optimism in the face of its predicted global holocaust.

The final screenplay was a hefty 192 pages (later cut to 175 after production began), though dozens of changes would be made on the set and after two sneak previews, mainly for the better. For Capra and Riskin, screenplays were merely a guideline, not a holy writ to be slavishly adhered to. In the end, *only a third of Lost Horizon was filmed as written* with scenes and sequences added and improvised as production wore on.

Capra had no doubt about whom he wanted for Conway. "Had the High Lama been able to scour the whole world for a man to carry on his vision of Shangri-La," Capra wrote, "he would have selected Ronald Colman."

Except for Colman's role, casting was an open matter. There would be scores of auditions and a few automatic choices but few problems finding the right actors to fill secondary roles. Casting the High Lama would prove to be the biggest headache. In fact, the role went unfilled until the final week of production.

The first pre-production footage shot was aerial scenes of the Sierra Nevada mountains for the plane hijacking sequence. The cinematographer was Elmer Dyer, ASC, a man with a reputation for dare-devil angles since shooting the dogfight scenes for Howard Hughes' *Hell's Angels* (1931). He had worked for Capra before on an early talkie called *Dirigible* (1931), so he was the natural choice to film



winter scenes of snow-capped mountains and other high altitude terrain.

These aerial shots were later processed with shots of a Douglas airplane. (These process shots look as obvious today as they did then.)

While pre-production phases were humming along, Capra turned his attention to his biggest worry: the score. Russian composer Dimitri Tiomkin got this plum assignment after Capra heard him playing piano at a Hollywood party.

So that Tiomkin could get a feeling for the kind of movie *Lost Horizon* would be, Capra encouraged him to visit the set as often as possible. Throughout four months of principal photography and several months of editing and retakes, Tiomkin was almost perpetually at work, composing themes and variations on themes – some of it based on Oriental music – for almost every scene in the movie. Aiding him in coordinating this huge task was Max Rabinowitsch, pianist in the film's original opening reels.

As top director at Columbia, Capra had the luxury of working with his favorite crew for

The lamasery, night lighted for the funeral of the High Lama.



Refueling scene at the dry lake location.

all his movies. His principal co-workers included: Joseph Walker, ASC, director of photography; Ed Bernds as sound mixer; Buster Libbott on the microphones; and George Hagar as head electrician. Walker had his favorite camera crew, Victor Scheurich and George Kelley, operators, and Alfred S. Keller and William Jolly, assistant cameramen.

Bus Libbott says, "Capra was relaxed and easygoing. If something screwed up technically that couldn't be helped, he had all the patience in the world. But, if *you* screwed up, God help you because he bawled you out something fierce and it was a lesson you never forgot. You had to be fast and accurate with Capra, but if you knew what you were doing, there were never any questions."

The contributions of all the crew members were important, but Joe Walker's most of all. He was much sought-after for his superior artistry and worked largely by instinct borne of long experience. He had his own set of 98 lenses custom-made to suit his needs, and custom carrying cases for them.

Because he was an intuitive craftsman, Walker felt little need for formal discussions of camera set-ups prior to production. The few discussions there were, he recalled, had to do with the Shangri-La set and the lighting of the High Lama. "Before it was built," he says, "I discussed the Shangri-La set placement at Columbia Ranch with Stephen Goosson and Lionel Banks. Correct orientation was important in order to take full advantage of the sunlight." To that end, he made extensive camera tests of the set with and without filters for day shots and with filters for night shots.

Keller kept a daily log of camera set-ups, filters and lenses, adding up to a complete record of how the movie was filmed. Various filters were used throughout to contrast the fantasy world of Shangri-La with the reality of the outside world and diffusion and neutral density were used sparingly. According to Keller, the filtration used was very conservative, the main goal being to achieve a silky look

for the Shangri-La scenes while ensuring that everything matched within a certain range of that look. The filters used ranged from light yellow-green for Shangri-La day exteriors to deeper yellow-green for day interiors to deep-red for day-for-night shots. A neutral density filter, Keller says, "was used on the medium long shot of Jane and the kids at school when Colman enters the scene. This graduated filter, from Density .25 to Clear, was used to balance the bright sky through the trees to the shaded foreground where the action took place."

Walker achieved the look that Capra was after, managing the astonishing feat of matching shots throughout with multiple camera set-ups in temperatures that ranged from 120 degrees in Palm Springs to eight degrees at an ice house.

After six months of exhaustive pre-production work to ensure that Columbia's first multi-million dollar movie would at least *look* authentic, principal photography finally began on March 23, 1936. The first sequence shot was the prologue aboard the S.S. Manchuria. Robert Conway (Colman) is returning to England with Lord Gainsford (Hugh Buckler) and is having trouble remembering where he's been the past year. As he plays an unpublished Chopin melody at the piano in the ship's lounge, his memory begins to stir.

As usual on a Capra film, almost every scene was shot from a variety of angles. This kind of coverage gave editors Gene Havlick and Gene Milford a great deal of leeway in making sure the action flowed smoothly and concisely.

Plane interiors were nothing new in movies, but the ones shot for *Lost Horizon* do have a unique aspect. "Capra wanted to show that there were mountains on both sides," explains Ed Bernds, "and he wanted Colman to go from one side to the other and look out and see the mountains on that side too. So, Capra used double rear projection, adding to the reality of the scene, breaking free of the stereotyped way of doing it. That was an instance where he spent several thousand dollars to get added realism."

For the first few weeks, *Lost Horizon* was shot more-or-less in sequence, giving the cast the rare luxury of a sense of continuity. The reasons for this were that the lamasery set at Columbia Ranch was still being erected and wouldn't be ready till early May, and the ice house where snow exteriors were to be shot hadn't yet been leased. So, Capra had to plot each week's shooting to get the maximum amount of work done using the sets and locations readily available to him.

For this reason, the next sequence to be shot was as consummately pre-planned as it was logistically complex: the riot sequence at Baskul Airport that now opens the movie. Capra hit his stride here because he was a master at crowd scenes and had this complicated sequence blocked out in advance. The location had been scouted - Metropolitan Airport in Van Nuys.



Night-for-night at the mythical Baskul. John Howard and Ronald Colman are at lower left.

Though Capra had a reputation for working fast, Berndt recalls that progress on this particular sequence was slow, and that it was bone-chillingly cold. His sharpest memory is of "old Chinese men and women in thin coolie outfits freezing uncomplainingly as it got colder and colder." The Chinese extras were used for the mob scenes and it took some doing to get all the extras needed, both from Central Casting and from Chinatown.

Shooting finally wrapped that first night at 4 a.m. Everybody was back the following night, after a day's work at the studio, to shoot scenes in the airport's waiting room, as well as exterior scenes with more than 200 extras. Despite the cold, the extras enjoyed themselves, working themselves into a frenzy for the scenes where jeeps loaded with armed revolutionaries roar into the airport, machine guns blazing, to prevent people from escaping in an airlift. Three more nights the following week were required for completion of this sequence.

Capra was back at the studio on April 3. After two days spent shooting plane interiors, the company went to Lucerne Dry Lake, near Victorville, to shoot the desert refueling sequence. A large company of extras was assembled: 350 men, women and children, along with scores of livestock. To house this horde, an Anderson camp was erected at the site. Anderson was – and is – a company that specializes in pitching temporary tent cities for movie companies: living tents, a mess hall, a hospital, recreation rooms, darkrooms for the cameramen, prop rooms and dressing rooms. The cast and crew were housed at a nearby hotel.

After two days, it was back to the studio on April 9 to spend the afternoon screening rushes and on to a fourth exhausting night of shooting at the airport. More waiting room scenes had to

be shot, but the big event of the night was Colman burning a makeshift hangar to light the way for rescuing planes. Everything was organized to a fault, with several cameras at key positions. There could only be one take for the hangar-burning scene, so the timing had to be dead-on.

To insure maximum coverage, four cameras were positioned, two with 50mm lenses, two with 40mm lenses: 1 & 2) Medium and long shots of the crowd, one of them with Colman; 3 & 4) medium and long angles of the burning building. This was the only scene in the movie where more than three cameras were used.

April 10 was the fifth and final night of airport filming, and the most exciting. The last scenes involving the Douglas plane were shot, climaxing with a dramatic night takeoff, a multiple camera set-up with armed rebels blazing away as the plane propels into the night sky.

One of the last plane interiors to be filmed at the studio was a shot of the five actors huddling on the floor of the plane when it crashes. To capture the look of crashing at the moment of impact, Walker tried several effects, then simply "loosened the camera on its tripod and gave it a couple of hard yanks" as he filmed the scene.

The following two weeks, from late April to early May, were spent at the Los Angeles Ice and Cold Storage Warehouse at Seventh and Mesquite Streets in the heart of downtown. Capra was after the real thing and found it at this ice house for a rental fee of \$1,000 a day for a total of six weeks' shooting.

Aside from perpetual freezing cold, it had three major advantages: it was insulated, with refrigeration a constant 24 degrees; it was large enough to convert into a sound stage 90 x 40 feet in



Howard and Colman in the ice house stage. This time the airplane is a plywood mock-up.

area and 40 feet high; and it had artificial snow machines which otherwise were used to grind ice for keeping fish fresh. This ice house had been used for several movies prior to *Lost Horizon*, but not on such a large scale.

Regis Gubser was the technician in charge of the engineering division for the company that owned the ice house. His job throughout filming included "putting the snow where they wanted it and making sure the power connections were right."

The planes were exterior and interior mock-ups, the former made of plywood. Both were built on the sound-stage by the Columbia construction crew, which also made mountain backdrops of canvas "skins" mounted on large wooden frameworks and spray-painted.

For the mountain-climbing scenes, the ice house crew filled in the crevasses of the backdrops with snow to help give the illusion of an icy terrain. "The actors would climb up one of them," says Gubser, "and go on to another scene and the crew would move the skins around each time. They were climbing on a different mountain backdrop each time, but it looked like they were continuously going up the same old mountain."

The avalanche scenes were accomplished with large snow bins filled with tons of snow and cornflakes. When an avalanche was needed, a trapdoor would be pulled and down would come a mountain of deadly-looking snow.

Capra had problems, though, adjusting to working in subfreezing temperatures. "We ran into a nightmare of technical hangups," he recalls. "Cold film rolling through the cameras developed

static electricity that fogged the film. We had to cover film magazines with electrically heated 'overcoats.' New cold-resisting lubricants had to be found for cameras and motors.

"The extreme range of temperature from 'on' to 'off' cracked light sockets and shattered bulbs. Rubber electric cables stiffened, cracked and short-circuited. Electricians' hands froze on the cold metal. Yes, there were problems. But in that li'l old ice house we shot . . . interiors of the plane, its crack-up, the treks, the blizzards, the avalanche that engulfed the porters, Margo suddenly turning into an old woman, John Howard's suicide leap, and Colman's super-human wanderings in quest of his lost Shangri-La."

Because of the time needed to build sets for each scene, filming was done only a few days each week. "There were a lot of days" Gubser recalls, "when they shot very little and others when they were changing the scenery around. Sometimes when there was a major change, we'd have to defrost everything and get all the snow out and they'd come back in and rebuild what they wanted and we would snow that in."

The Shangri-La exterior at Columbia Ranch was finally ready the first week in May, so, starting May 2, the trek to and the entrance to the huge lamasery set were shot, in reverse order, over five days, with each scene shot twice.

In late May, the first scenes were shot at the Tibetan village at Lake Sherwood. The first day, May 25, was spent shooting Colman's walk through the valley, that sequence where the audience is able to luxuriate with him as he discovers the peaceful milieu of Shangri-La and the cheerful disposition of its natives. In the finished film, the ambience of Tibetan village life is captured to seeming perfection as we watch artisans making clay pots and tanning goat skins, and farmers tending their sheep.

Joe Walker shot these scenes with diffusion filters because "I wanted to set them apart from the everyday world. But I had to use discretion. I didn't want it to be a dream world. It had to be believable."

On June 2, the entrance to the Shangri-La pass was filmed. This marked the first time anything had been shot on brand new Stage 8, which had been joined to Stage 9 for this scene. The camera was in 8 while the process projector showing the stormy background was in 9. In effect, they were one large stage with a total area of 300 x 75 feet.

The scene also took a long time to set up because of the process screen and the slide projector showing mountains that the cast was supposed to look at pretending they were gazing at Shangri-La for the first time.

One of the intermediate technical hangups took place in mid-June when Capra tried to shoot a scene with Colman and Wyatt walking on a treadmill while rear projection showed cherry blossom trees. "That was kind of a disappointment,"

Bernds recalls. "The first time we tried it, it looked phony as hell, and the treadmill was too noisy. It rumbled. We had to postpone reshooting a couple of days while they silenced it."

June 17 saw the start of several days of location shooting at a ranch on Mulholland Drive, Brent's Crag in the San Fernando Valley, and Palm Springs. These locales were used for a chase on horseback (begun at Columbia Ranch), forest scenes, an idyll at a waterfall, and a nude dive. The outside ranch was deemed the ideal spot to film a few choice takes of Colman – or rather his double, Western star Buddy Roosevelt, since Colman was afraid of horses – chasing Wyatt across some beautiful scenery. The chase would climax at the waterfall.

There were several cascades to choose from in the nearby mountains, but the most spectacular and only *real* waterfall in Southern California was Tahquitz Falls in Palm Springs. This meant the crew and the two stars had to brave scorching 120 degree heat for a few summer days to put a spring-like interlude on film.

On their first day of shooting at the falls, the crew set up the second nude scene in the movie, wherein Jane Wyatt climbs out of the lake onto a rock, then dives back in after a squirrel alerts her that someone (Colman) is watching. The climbing out and diving in were both done as extreme long shots from across a lake and were made with a stunt double named Mary Wiggins. For close-ups in the lake, Wyatt wore a strapless flesh-colored suit.

At this point only a handful of major scenes remained: a violin lesson with Wyatt; the funeral of the High Lama; the scene where Wyatt chases after Colman to bring him back; and the all-important scenes with the High Lama and Colman. For these last two scenes, one snag remained: finding an actor to play the High Lama. Several had been approached for the role:

A silent test was made with Fritz Leiber (father of the famous science fiction writer) on March 16, a week before production began, but Capra decided he was too virile for the role. Henry B. Walthall, famous as the Little Colonel in Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), died before he could test for it. Albert E. Anson, was tested lying on a stretcher and Capra thought he was marvelous but there was an insurmountable problem: Anson couldn't be insured because of his ill health (he died soon after). A 90 year-old stage actor who had never been in a movie tested perfectly for the role, but was so overjoyed when he was phoned at home about winning the part that he collapsed and died on the spot.

So many actors were dying in pursuit of this role that the press was having a field day proclaiming a jinx on *Lost Horizon*.

When I spoke with Sam Jaffe several years ago, he remembered wistfully how he got the role:

"A friend of mine who was then a producer at RKO said to me, 'Everybody is trying out



Buddy Roosevelt, riding for Colman, at Tahquitz Falls.

for the role of the High Lama, why don't you ask your agent to get you a test?' So, I took the test (on July 6) and then I got a wire from my agent saying it's a feather in my cap; I got the role."

Walter Connolly was also filmed in the role of the High Lama, but only after Jaffe had done it first. Connolly was then under contract to Columbia and Harry Cohn ordered the High Lama scenes shot with Connolly by Joseph Ruttenberg, ASC.

Making matters worse, Capra put a beard on Connolly. It didn't work. For one thing, Connolly was a nasal-voiced man who had made a career of playing paunchy, wheezing, exasperated executives, hardly the type to play a 250-year-old ascetic visionary. The clincher came when Capra saw the Connolly footage as editor Gene Milford was viewing it on his Moviola. Milford cracked, "He looks like Santa Claus."

The High Lama scenes were filmed from July 10–16, with Sunday the 13 being a day off. For the most part, filming went smoothly, but an-



Scene in the Valley of the Moon, better known as Sherwood Forest.

noyances did crop up: flies buzzed on the set from time to time, so filming had to be stopped to get rid of them, prompting Bernds to note in his diary: "More fly-buzz trouble – expensive talent swats flies as \$ ticks away;" and best boy (assistant electrician) Al Later was standing near the mike when his stomach rumbled, ruining a take.

Walker said the important thing was "did we want to see his face, or should we have him speak from out of the darkness? Capra decided that we should see the High Lama's face. I decided to add a halo of light. Capra liked that."

After all the work that had gone into filming the first High Lama scene, the whole thing had to be reshot. When Capra viewed the footage with Gene Milford, he asked the editor's opinion of Jaffe. "He looks like a monkey," the outspoken Milford remarked. The makeup didn't look right, so on July 15 and 16, the whole two reels were filmed again with different lighting (to throw more of a shadow on Jaffe) and with Jaffe speaking louder.

This still wasn't the end for that scene. Jaffe was recalled again on December 22, five months after he thought he had completed the role and two to three months after Connolly tested for it on September 28 and October 17.

July 16 climaxed the High Lama scenes, with candles illuminating Jaffe's face reposing in death as a dimmer drained light from the scene. It was also Colman's last official day on the picture. July 17 was the final day of shooting. British foreign office scenes were filmed first thing in the morning and production wrapped at noon.

As *Lost Horizon* was being shot, editor Gene Havlick was kept busy splicing together all the usable footage so that, a month after production ended, a rough cut of nearly five-and-a-half hours was ready for Capra to view. There were varying reports in the trade papers as to exactly long this mass of footage was, but co-editor Gene Milford says it was under 29,000 feet.

Many sequences that went on for ten minutes or more were either cut out or shaved to

an aesthetic fine point. The funeral procession for the High Lama is an example of shaving in which the approach used was unique to the film. Faced with over 20 minutes of shapeless footage, Gene Milford was inspired to cut it all to a certain rhythm: "I asked Tiomkin if he could write his score for that sequence to a rhythm of eight feet, six feet, four feet, two feet, one foot in repetition, so that the procession would be more compelling. He said he could, so that's the way I cut the sequence, with each shot shorter than the last. It worked out very well, I think."

The editing went through various stages, causing innumerable problems for Tiomkin who had to keep adapting his score to keep up with the changes. Fortunately, he had a great deal of high caliber help with the orchestration. Hugo Friedhofer and Robert Russell Bennett orchestrated sections of the score, mainly to get the job done as quickly as possible.

Also, a few key scenes called for choral work: the title sequence, the entrance to Shangri-La, the trek to the lamasery, and the funeral procession. The choir chosen for this work was the 50-member Hall Johnson Choir, a renowned black group that had just made a name for itself with choral scenes for the fantasy film *Green Pastures* (1936). Jester Hairston, assistant conductor, did the choral arrangements for *Lost Horizon* and rehearsed the group for two months before recording, stepping in for an ill Hall Johnson.

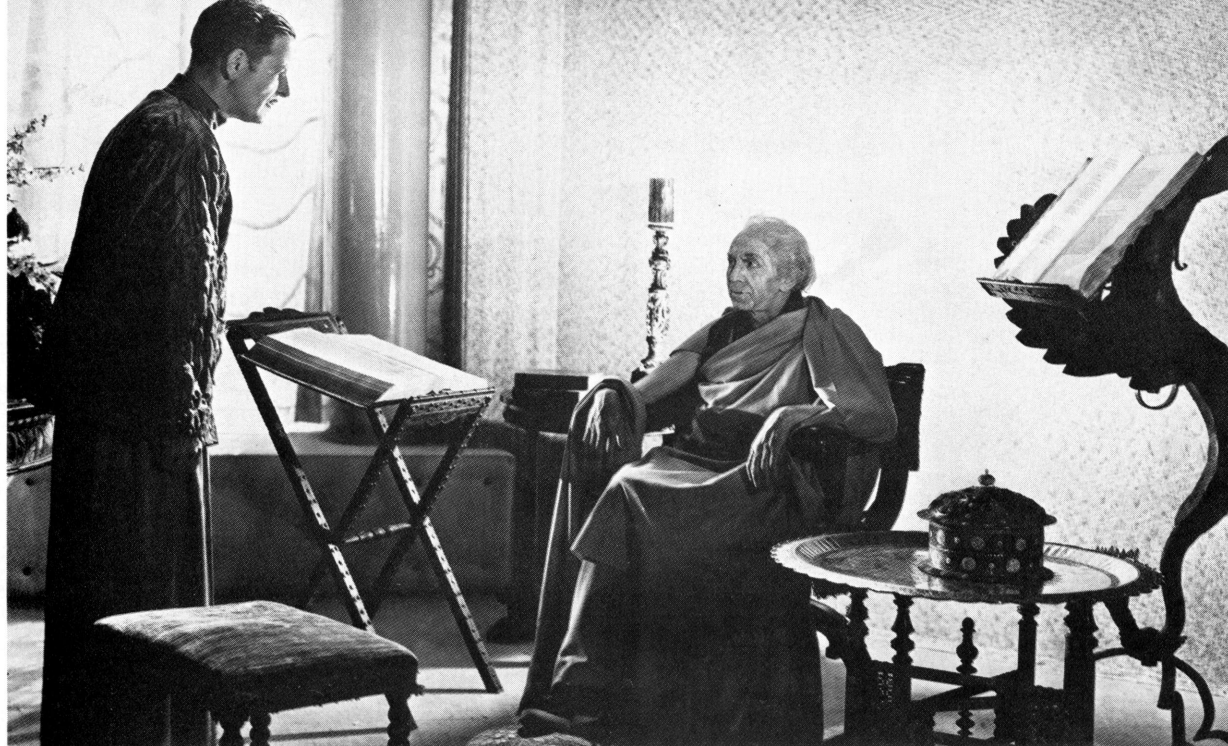
The hardest part of these choral scenes was getting the right kind of vocal effect and Tiomkin was having a hard time communicating precisely what he wanted. Hairston says, "We tried it different ways but couldn't get it. After awhile, I said 'Ohhh, he wants us to sound like *hants*. And Dimitri says 'What is this *hant*? I said 'Wait a moment, we'll give it to you.' I turned to the choir and said 'I want you to sound like *hants folk*.' It's a Southern expression. It means you sound like ghosts. We got that sound and Dimitri said, 'That's it, Jester. That's the sound I want.'"

To ensure that his gamble on Tiomkin paid off, Capra hired Max Steiner as musical conductor and to rewrite the music if it didn't measure up. And yet, Steiner never actually did any conducting until the music was recorded.

The first sneak preview was held at a theater in Santa Barbara in November and the reaction was disastrous.

Drastic editorial changes were made and, over the next three months, several scenes were reshot and new ones were added, bringing the film down to under two-and-a-half hours. The retakes included segments on the 10 Downing St. set and Jane Wyatt running after Colman to bring him back. The alternate ending of Conway walking back into Shangri-La was also shot but discarded.

The major new scene that was shot and the major retakes were inter-related. Capra felt that the first High Lama scene was way too long at 16



Colman meets the High Lama, Sam Jaffe. In the movie the scene is dark, unlike this brightly lighted still.

minutes and was looking for some way to delete all the exposition about Father Perrault. After considering several ideas, he and Riskin came up with a three-and-a-half minute scene of Conway and Chang discussing the man behind Shangri-La. This was accomplished in a one-take medium shot filmed on December 28, 1936. This scene eliminated the need for the first eight minutes of the first High Lama scene and led to a more dramatically effective opening.

When Colman enters the High Lama's chamber, the camera cuts to a chose-shot of Jaffe, panning down to his missing leg. Cut to reaction shot of Colman. These two shots drive home the earlier discussion and make us aware at once that we are looking at a 250-year-old wise man.

Colman and Jaffe, of course, were recalled to redo the scene and shooting took place December 21-23, 1936 at the National General studio in Hollywood, there being no available space at Columbia. The final scene shot for the film was the alternate ending on January 12, 1937, and production was finally at an end. All the re-takes and re-editing meant that Tiomkin had to compose new segue music for the main titles, re-edit themes and overhaul whole sections while dropping other parts of the score; again with help from major composers.

All the extra work done on the movie from November, 1936, to January, 1937, meant that the premiere had to be postponed one month from its original February premiere date. Finally, on March 3, 1937, *Lost Horizon*, billed as Capra's "Mightiest Motion Picture," premiered at the Globe Theatre in New York on a two-a-day performance basis with a running time of 132 minutes.

△

Sam Frank, a Los Angeles free-lance writer, is completing a book about his favorite film, Lost Horizon.

Lost Horizon Credits

A Columbia Picture; Harry Cohn, *executive producer*; produced and directed by Frank Capra; screen play by Robert Riskin; director of photography, Joseph B. Walker, ASC; music by Dimitri Tiomkin; musical conductor, Max Steiner; aerial photography, Elmer G. Dyer, ASC; art director, Stephen Goosson; costumes, Ernest Dryden; film editors, Gene Havlick, Gene Milford; special camera effects, E. Roy Davidson, ASC, Ganahl "Kit" Carson, ASC; choral music, Hall Johnson Choir; assistant directors, C. C. Coleman, Milton Carter; sound engineer, Edward Berndt; additional photography, Henry Freulich, ASC; camera operators, Victor Scheurich, George Kelley; assistant cameraman, Alfred S. Keller (later ASC), William Jolly; and Irving Klein, Roy Babbitt, Sam Rosen; assistant aerial camera, Rod Tolmie; assistant art directors, Lionel Banks, Paul Murphy; set designs, Cary Odell; interior decorations, Babs Johnstone; technical advisor, Harrison Forman; costume designs, Dan Sayre Groesbeck; musical director, M. W. Stoloff; choral director, Jester Hairston; orchestrations by Charles Maxwell, Herman Hand, Max Reese, William Grant Still, Bernhard Kaun, Hugo Friedhofer, George Parrish, Robert Russell Bennett, Peter Brunelli; musical advisors, Max Rabinowitch, John Tettener; microphones, Buster Libbott; dialogue director, Harold Winston; head electrician, George Hager; best boy, Al Later; ice house engineer, Regis Gubser; head grip, James Lloyd; script clerk, Eleanor Hall; property master, Jack Wren; set dressers, Ted Dickson, Fay Babcock; make-up, Johnny Wallace, Charles Huber; wardrobe, William Bridgehouse, Daisy Robinson; hairdressers, Helen Hunt, Rhoda Donaldson; Tibetan musical instruments, Henry Eichman; stills, Alfredo Valente, Irving Lippman, Schuyler Crail; Himalayan footage from *Der Daemon der Berge* by Andrew Marton; premiered March 3, 1937, running time 132 minutes; general release, 116½ minutes; 1942, 1948 reissues as *Lost Horizon of Shangri-La*, 108½ minutes; 1952 TV syndication, 95 minutes (later 108½ minutes); AFI 1977 release, 116½ minutes.

Robert Conway, Ronald Colman; Sondra Bizet, Jane Wyatt; Alexander P. Lovett, Edward Everett Horton; Henry Bernard, Thomas Mitchell; George Conway, John Howard; Maria, Margo; Gloria Stone, Isabel Jewell; Chang, H.B. Warner; High Lama, Sam Jaffe; Lord Gainsford, Hugh Buckler; Prime Minister, David Torrence; Leader of Porters, Noble Johnson; Talu, Val Durand; Fenner, Milton Owen; Airport Official, Richard Loo; Montaigne, John Tettener; Double for Wyatt, Mary Wiggins; Double for Colman, Buddy Roosevelt; and Willie Fung, Victor Wong, John Burton, John Milern, John T. Murray, Dennis D'Auburn, Lawrence Grant.

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- **For the Producer**, Lightflex simply had to be more affordable. It must add production values but not slow down production.

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The redesign achieved major improvements in three main areas:

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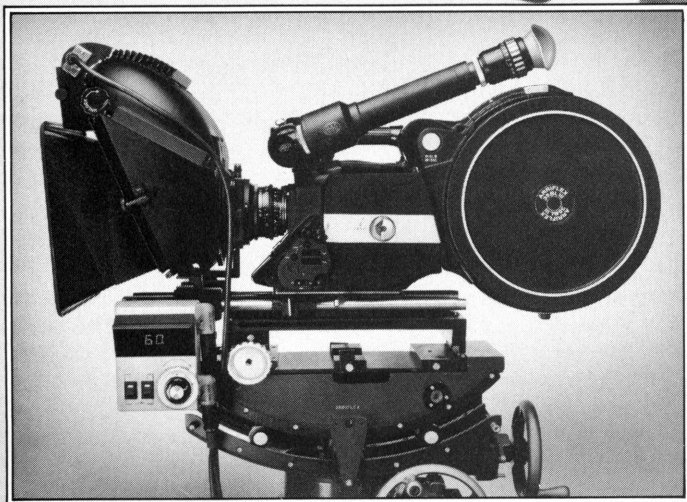
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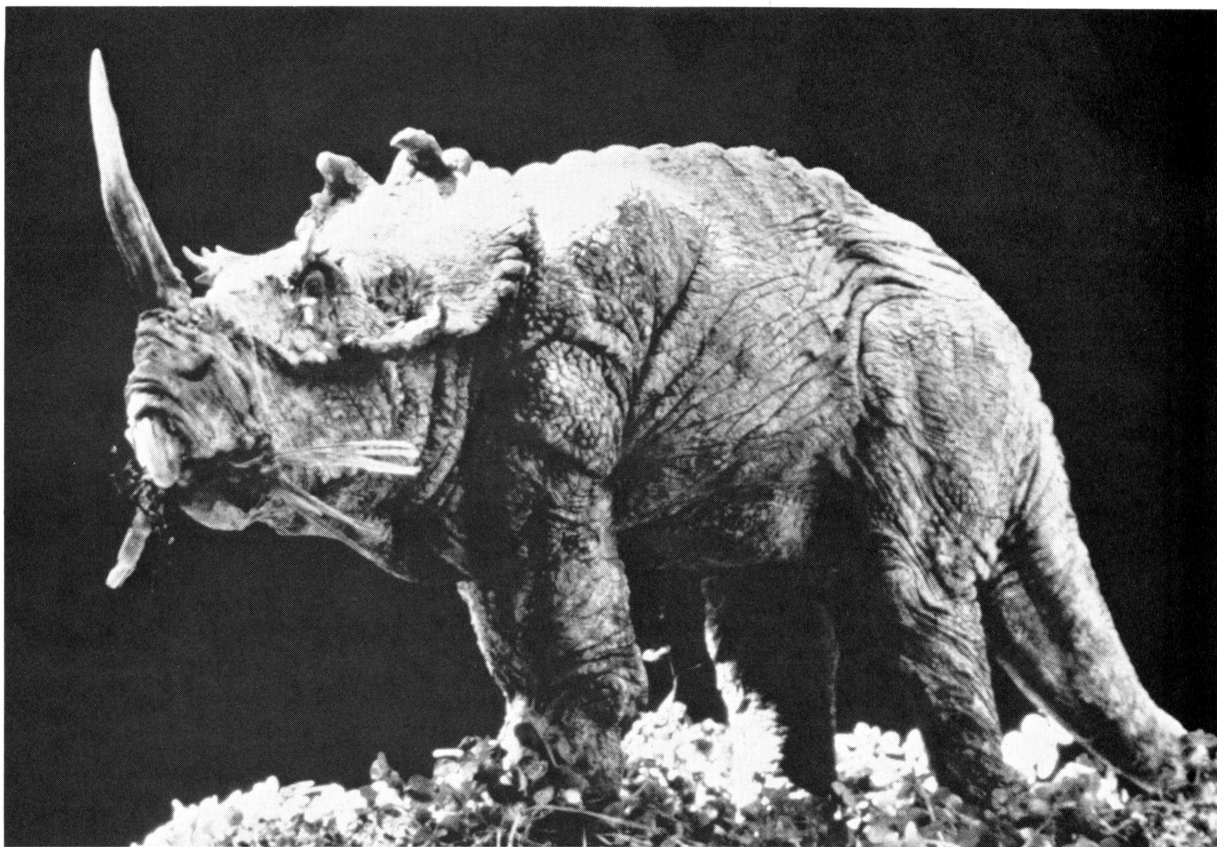
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Phil Tippett's *Dinosaurs*

by Paul Mandell

Imagine being transported back to the tail end of the Cretaceous period with a 16mm hand-held camera, riding a jeep through a prehistoric rain forest, tracking a family of duckbilled hadrosaurs *Wild Kingdom* style, and observing the hatching of their eggs – while predators encroach on their turf.

Stop-motion animator Phil Tippett made that journey, by filming it a frame at a time in his Berkeley-based special effects shop. Marlin Perkins couldn't have done a better job.

The occasion was a CBS television special called *Dinosaur!*, produced by Robert Guenette,

written by Steven Paul Mark, and narrated by Christopher Reeve. The show's format presents the superbly animated dinosaur footage as 16 vignettes interspersed with discussions by archaeologists, sculptors, and clips from the silent *Los World*, *King Kong*, and *One Million Years B.C.* While the mixed bag approach provides varying points of interest, it is Tippett's footage, shot with the authentic flair of a *National Geographic* documentary, that kept audiences glued to the tube for a well-spent hour when the program premiered last November.

As one can surmise, Phil Tippett and dinosaurs are old

friends. "It all started when I was about 5 years old," he says. "I've always loved dinosaurs and the films of Ray Harryhausen. And *King Kong*, of course. As a kid, I built and animated my own. Eventually I met David Allen and Jim Danforth. It was just a matter of time before I learned the craft and began doing it professionally."

Tippett's perseverance paid off. An alumnus of Cascade Pictures in Los Angeles and animator/creature designer for several low-budget features (*Pirhana*, *Crater Lake Monster*), he moved on to *Star Wars*. Together with Jon Berg, he sculpted some of the Cantina creatures and co-animated the Chessmen sequence.

When Industrial Light & Magic relocated to the Bay area, Tippett and his associates developed the Go-Motion system. He worked closely with effects director Dennis Muren, Jon Berg, illustrator Joe Johnston, and armature maker Tom St. Amand. Motion blurs then became part of conventional stop-frame technique. The system was showcased in *The Empire Strikes Back* (who can forget the Tauntaun creature galloping across the tundra?). Subsequent permutations evolved for *Dragonslayer* and *Return of the Jedi*.

In recent years, Tippett had been shepherding ILM's creature fabrication program. When the production of *Jedi* required multitudes of Ewoks and the like, energies were channeled into furry costumes, rod puppets, and cable-operated monsters (the Rancor, Jabba the Hut). After that laborious experience, Tippett decided to form his own company and return to his true love: dinosaurs. The television show came about serendipitously.

"After *Return of the Jedi*, I began seriously thinking about doing my own film on prehistoric life. The result was a 12-minute short entitled *Prehistoric Beast*, done with only a few characters and a minimal budget. I worked on that from 1983 to 1985 with my wife, Julie Roman, and a select group of artists and technicians. It took two years to complete.

"Around the half-way point, I received a call from Robert Guenette and his associates. They were exploring the possibility of doing an hour-long dinosaur show for CBS and had heard of my own film through ILM. In July of 1984, I was invited to their production facility in Hollywood and met writer and co-producer Steve Mark. Steve had been trying to get this project going for about 3 years.

"On the basis of the 6 or 7 minutes I had shot for *Prehistoric Beast*, they pretty much hired me on the spot and asked me to come up with a rough budget. The agreement was to use excerpts



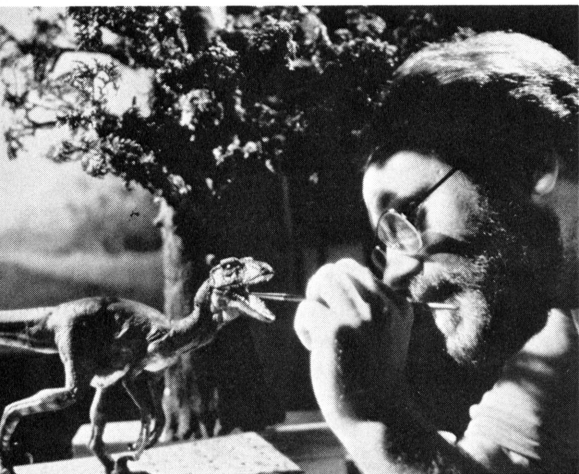
Opposite page:
Monoclonius,
ceratopsian dinosaur
reproduced in
exquisite detail for
Dinosaur! Above:
Phil Tippett puts a
duck-billed
hadrosaurus through
a scene one frame at
a time. Left: A
family of hadrosaurs
in an authentic late
Cretaceous setting.

from my film consisting of tyrannosaur and monoclonius footage, in addition to having me create new sequences. So we made a deal for 16 vignettes based on my own outline – what I thought the characters should be, and guidelines for the action.

"Robert Guenette actually put the film together, but the concept was really Steve Mark's. There was some great enthusiasm on their part, and that enthusiasm was really helpful in my getting so much animation done in a short

period of time. We only had six months."

In an effort to be as scientifically accurate as possible, Tippett consulted with members of the paleontology department at the University of Berkeley. He dealt primarily with Rob Long, who uncovered a major dinosaur find in Arizona two years ago. "They were really inspirational. Every Thursday night we'd get together, eat hamburgers, drink beer, and talk about dinosaurs. Rob would bring in a botanist or



Sculptor Randy Dutra with flesh-eating *Deinonychus*, one of the fiercer performers in *Dinosaur!*

specialist in prehistoric life every other week.

"Rob Long eats and breathes dinosaurs," Tippetts quips. "He must have the most extensive photographic collection in America. Most dinosaur books are not that specific – the information tends to be more general and the reconstructions are artist's guesses, rather than showing firsthand what the actual bones look like."

Steve Mark wrote the show's material according to Tippetts's outline. Since there wasn't enough budget to do a survey of all three geological epochs, the segments were centered in the late Cretaceous period, shortly before the dinosaurs' extinction. Great pains were taken to invest these scenes with a far more subjective, quasi-documentary look than had ever been done. Motion blurs, tracking shots, and light flares – all traditionally inhibited by stop-action photography – were ingeniously achieved with no high-tech equipment at all.

"We tried to visualize what would happen if we went back in time with a movie camera and followed a real dinosaur walking around in the woods. We wouldn't have ideal lighting conditions and would occasionally get sun flares. Or we'd have a room lens on it and wouldn't be able to frame it well, and the camera might be wobbling. We'd be trying to grab shots here and there. I was able to get a bit more daring with the stop-motion in that regard.

"These things weren't just dim-witted reptiles, as many people picture them," Tippetts says soberly. "They were dinosaurs, their own animal. They weren't mammals or lizards, but rather a composite of both. According to what scientists have assessed, dinosaurs had their own level of sophistication. So we tried to stress that, by showing the family unit. We thought of bears – how bear cubs relate to their parents. There's a danger in that, though – you can't let it get *too* cute, just enough to make your point."

Dinosaur construction began in November 1984. Of his crew, Tippetts is particularly proud. Randy Dutra (of *Jedi* and *Gremlins*) sculpted the animals. Tom St. Amand built the armatures and did half the animation. (He also animated the bikers in *ET*, the chickenwalker in *Jedi*, the model humans in *Indiana Jones* and *Cocoon*.) Julie Roman (of *Amadeus*) edited the sound effects and created her own from existing animal tracks. Terry Chostner operated camera on half the animation. Sheila Duignan assisted the animators. Tomia Marge did the miniature sets on parallel tables and painted the backgrounds, which she followed from Doug Henderson's illustrations.

"Doug is a great wildlife and landscape artist, whose specialty is doing dinosaurs," Tippetts points out. "Actually, I hired him before Steve Mark came up with the script, and he worked from the rough draft. He did pages upon pages of rough sketches based on that draft. I told Doug not to inhibit himself and draw the wildest settings he could imagine. The reams of paper he submitted were eventually turned into the storyboards.

"On Tomia Marge's painted backings, we weren't necessarily trying to get as realistic as possible. In other words, we weren't trying to kid anybody. You want to concentrate on the material and not get lost in an avalanche of detail."

"Randy Dutra made foam castings of his sculpture. The skins were cast separately and placed over the animals. There aren't a lot of hard edges and angles on the models as one is accustomed to seeing in the movies. The designs were based on what is deemed accurate from a scientific standpoint. One thing we tried for was a definite thinness in the legs of the *Deinonychus* and *Struthiomimus*. The specially designed armatures by Tom St. Amand made all the difference in the world."

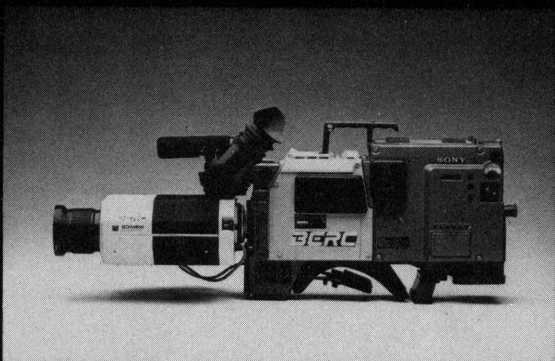
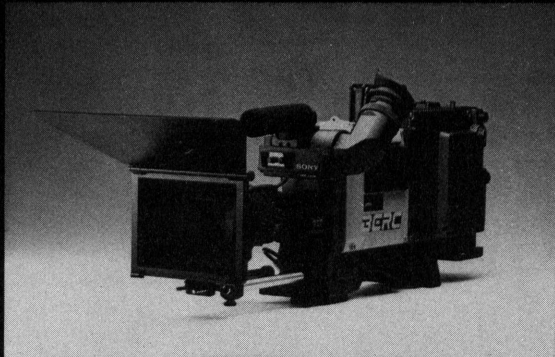
The menagerie created for *Dinosaur!* flirted with the multitudinous work done by Marcel Delgado for *The Lost World* 60 years ago. Included were a family of duckbilled hadrosaurs, a family of long-necked sauropods, a tyrannosaur, a *Struthiomimus*, a *Deinonychus*, and a *Monoclonius* – 14 puppets in all, many of which were painstakingly blurred per frame, requiring long exposures and lots of patience.

"The animals were kept small. The sauropod's head was probably no bigger than your baby finger! The joints were extremely dainty. Tom animated those and ended up doing all the closeups. Keeping them small enabled us to exert better control over them and allowed us to get around the strobing problem. As soon as the puppets start getting big, they're a lot harder to handle. We were able to move fast and shoot everything quickly.

"At first, we didn't know if we could get certain shots," Tippetts admits, "particularly when they run by and *over* the camera. We studied a great deal of *Wild Kingdom* footage and stylized it during animation. We tried to get into *herds* of dinosaurs. One shot taken from my short film featured a herd of *Monocloniuses*. The babies were paper cutouts."

Were the stop-motion sequences for *Dinosaur!* photographed with an EmpireFlex, Mitchell movement, super-duper VistaVision camera? No way. Phil Tippetts used a good old 16mm Bolex Rex 5.

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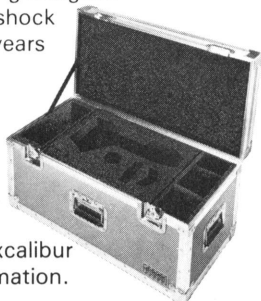
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"It seemed *perfect* for TV. The bigger your format, the more problems you run into, particularly with depth of field. Sixteen millimeter allowed us to get in really close on the puppets. We used a 10mm lens on some shots and low angles to accentuate their size, particularly for the sauropods. It was a saving grace for those shots. But sometimes a 10mm lens acts kind of funny; it can create distortion problems and take in more area than one might see through the viewfinder. We mostly used a 25mm lens. In some cases we used a telephoto. Sixteen millimeter editing is a lot cheaper than 35mm, and the television format is almost identical to 16. In looking through the lens, you're getting pretty much what you'll see on the tube. And you don't have to worry about TV cutoff."

Three Bolexes were used simultaneously on different setups, with stepper motors that came from ILM. Attached were digital timing devices commonly found in photographic darkrooms. It allowed Tippett to make exposures from $\frac{1}{10}$ of a second to an hour, giving him a complete range on his shutters.

"We engineered it ourselves. I had a lot of assistance from Mike MacKenzie at ILM, who once helped me at a time when I was trying to find an economical way to do stop-motion without purchasing arm-and-a-leg intervalometers, which don't do much, anyway, in the way of exposures. Electronic-oriented people like Mary Brennis got our motors working. It's remarkably simple. We generally stuck to a 2-second exposure, but we sometimes used 8 or 12 seconds for maximum depth of field."

Technically, the outstanding feature of Tippett's sequences are the camera movements and puppet blurs. Most of it defies traditional associations with stop-motion aesthetic - there is no strobe, there are no wires, and the shots approach a *cinema verité* look. One could easily be fooled into think-

ing that the dinosaurs are cable-operated miniatures moving in real time. The catch? Such miniatures are not capable of this kind of articulation, which can only be done frame by frame. Persistence of vision carries it along, and there is little time to think about it. But the trick is simple, and strictly low-tech.

"We did a variation of Go-Motion within our table-top sets," Tippett explains. "It was kind of like going back to the Tauntaun's running rig. The puppet wasn't bolted down to a table at all. To make it look airborne, it was mounted on a worm gear, which is nothing more than a threaded rod riding along a lathe bed. The gear allows the rod to move up and down in increments, which translates to the puppet striding. After I hand-animated the legs and head, the whole puppet was being moved on the rod during exposure. That blurred the puppet on film. It could run over the camera that way."

How was the rod made invisible to the viewer? "We put strips of Scotchlite material on it and front-projected a slide of the background scene. A Scotchlite screen was placed behind the set. The screen and the strip picked up the slide projection and blended with each other. Getting both in focus is easier in 16mm, for you can carry focus better using 16mm optics."

Blurs on the camera were introduced at the same time by mounting the figure on a geared head with a dial indicator and having the camera move in increments during exposure. Nothing new here. But rarely has stop-motion footage used so *much* of it for a specific look.

"We made those moves intuitively," he adds. "It was practically improvised. The camera lagged in anticipation of animal movement, as though we were out there in the woods without a tripod. Except we were doing it frame by frame." Forest atmosphere was simulated by painting the sun's rays on sheets of glass in front of the set.

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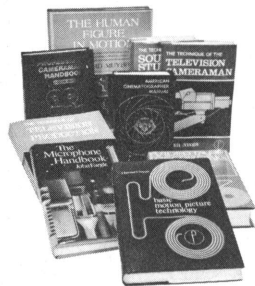
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Several shots of the hadrosaur chasing the ostrich-like struthiomimus used Ray Harryhausen's Dynamation technique of animating the models against a rear-projected background, masking off the entire area below the feet, and rephotographing the projection into the masked-off area. "That was done because the hadrosaur was built out of scale. The struthiomimus was *bigger* than the hadrosaur. For shots of one chasing the other, we had to 'shrink it down.' Using Dynamation, it's just a matter of placing one puppet closer to the camera and aligning their feet along the mask line. Dennis Muren bought one of the stop-motion projectors that had been built for the film *Caveman*. We projected 35mm 4-perf film on an r.p. screen just for those shots.

"Tremendous limitations exist with miniature rear projection work," Tippettt laments. "I love everything that Ray Harryhausen has done. But there were always budgetary problems. Cutting corners seemed to be the main goal. Everything was staged similarly. The limitations of r.p. work really halt you from being what I would characterize as 'contemporary' in how one designs films."

Working on a tight schedule required an assembly line approach similar to what had been done on *Mighty Joe Young* back in 1948. "Generally we'd do the shot, get it back the next day, OK it, and strike the setup. The next setup would be erected as quickly as possible, along with a rough lighting scheme and a wedge test, so we could see it the next day. We'd have our final lighting before lunch and shoot the scene after lunch. Terry Chostner and Tom St. Amand worked together on their setups. I did my own setups with the help of Randy Dutra. The third Bolex was reserved for specialty setups like clouds and dawn animation shots.

"The hairiest problem was *organization*, making sure that everything was broken down and storyboarded out, and keeping the shooting schedule up to date so no

one would ever be without a shot to do. We had to get about one shot a day. Fortunately the whole crew had some solid experience working under these conditions."

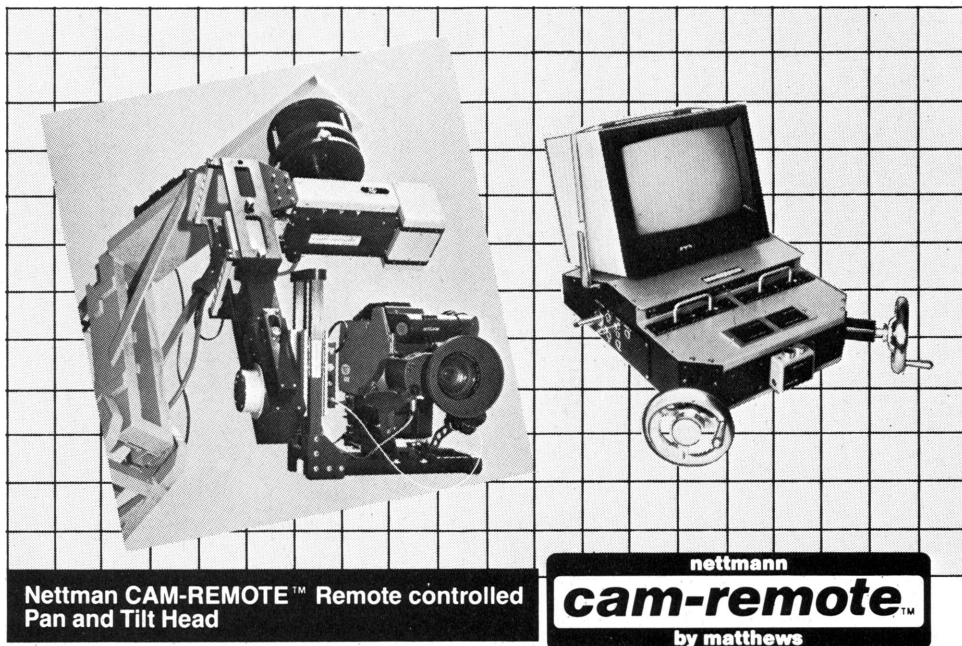
When animation wrapped in April 1985, Julie Roman started on the sound effects. She used a number of animal sounds borrowed from people's libraries in the Bay area and discovered some bizarre ambient background sounds, which engineer Richard Hymms had recorded in Australia. The most difficult to do were the duckbills – the lead family – as their voices had to communicate various emotional ranges. She actually cornered some magpies and synthesized their voices. That suited the duckbills just fine.

The project ended on schedule in May. Tippettt was slightly queasy about the local scientific community accepting his footage. "Dale Russell, another pre-eminent paleontologist, was inspirational. I thought they'd be critical of what I was doing, but they loved it for its accuracy. Seeing an allosaur being chased by a bunch of cavemen doesn't grab them, but they all grew up on it like the rest of us. Really, they're all *insane* about stop-motion dinosaurs. They love it. *King Kong* really did a lot for these people. Seeing a brontosaur in a steamy swamp with well-rendered matte paintings makes them very receptive to dinosaur filmmaking."

"I was happy with what turned out," he says, somewhat pragmatically. "Going into the project, you commit yourself to a delivery date. And with animation, you have no idea when the last frame will click off. You're really winging it."

The real reward for Phil Tippettt comes in the reaction of a less technically-conscious public. Beyond the motion blurs and scientific verisimilitude lies the substance of his footage – familial interactions and relationships. There's a lot of nuzzling and affection going on in there. Perhaps those images are more durable than the others. △

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Voigtlander & Murphy on *Highway to Heaven*

by Nora Lee

Brianne Murphy, ASC, wanted to be Julie Harris, then Elia Kazan. Ted Voigtlander, ASC, has a degree in bacteriology and plays the piano. But today the two Emmy award-winning cameramen alternate duties as director of photography on Michael Landon's "Highway to Heaven."

Very few television series have two directors of photography, but Landon has alternated cameramen since his days on "Bonanza." "I like to tell jokes and this way I get to tell the joke twice," deadpanned Landon. "No, the advantages are proper prep time for them, and a better chance for location scouting. Almost everything we do is on location and it is nice to be able to walk those locations prior to shooting. Since we go back-to-back, there would be no other way

to do it. It helps us to avoid any problems."

Landon and producer Kent McCray believe that they save time and money by alternating. But Landon added, "I also think there is nothing wrong with—in the best sense of the word—competition." Considering the string of Emmy awards and nominations his shows have garnered over the years, he may have something. As for Brianne Murphy and Ted Voigtlander, the twists and turns in their personal highways to heaven are the stuff of novels—except their stories are true.

Murphy started her career in the entertainment industry in New York in the early fifties. After college she went to the Neighborhood Playhouse, a famous New York acting school. "I

wasn't crazy about acting but I was crazy about show people," said Murphy. "There is something about them and I had to be a part of that. Being a girl in the early fifties and thinking, 'How do I be around show people?'—the only thing I could think of was acting." Her acting career progressed, but slowly. Her role model at the time was Julie Harris, but that was before Elia Kazan decided to make *On the Waterfront*, in New York.

Murphy found out about it and started hanging around the set. First she befriended the guards and ran errands for them, like quick trips to the liquor store. "One day the production manager was short of somebody to run an errand," she recalled. "He asked me to take a Zeiss over to F & B and swap it for a Cooke. I said, 'Sure.' I didn't have the vaguest

idea what he was talking about, but it was too good an opportunity to pass up. Of course once I got over there I asked, 'What's a Zeiss? What's a Cooke? And what's this thing in my hand?'" Murphy's cinematic education had begun.

"After a while I got to know Kazan a little bit and he allowed me to stay and watch what was happening. I got an overall idea of all the jobs that were on the set. It never occurred to me that there were no women doing any of them. I looked around and decided I would like to grow up to be Elia Kazan directing a picture like *On the Waterfront*. But, the way that I would learn to do what he knew, was that I would be Boris Kaufman – he was the cameraman. He was making the magic with this big black box."

Murphy observed the other people working on the set and got an overall understanding of what it takes to make a movie. Of all the possibilities – props, make-up, script supervisor – she kept in the back of her mind the idea that it would be nice to be a cameraman. She followed *On the Waterfront* through post production. The show finished and she went back to the Playhouse.

Not too long after that, the circus came to town – Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey. Murphy continued, "I was living in a five-dollar-a-week room on 52nd Street over a strip joint. Another actress, Kay Mitchell, was living there, too. There were four rooms and a bathroom down the hall. The circus came to town and I knocked on her door and said 'Kay, do you have any money?' She said, 'Why?' 'I have a wonderful idea. We're going to go to the circus tonight and perform as clowns – gratis. We won't charge them. But we need some money for costumes. I know where I can get the make-up.'" Murphy and Mitchell were already developing a certain reputation in New York. In recent weeks they had attended such functions as the Antoinette Perry Awards and the Academy Awards, also sans invitation.



"She had two dollars and change. She went out and bought some chintz for our costumes and I went over to NBC and asked Wally Cox for some clown make-up. We went to Ringling Brothers that night and we performed for four solid hours. We got out of there before anyone caught us. The next day, we thought we were so funny that we went down to the *New York Times*. We wanted to find ourselves an inch big in somebody's photography. But we found out that they didn't shoot opening night of the circus, they had covered the dress rehearsal. Of course we weren't there.

"But the *Times* asked 'Why?' When we told them what we had done, they sent a photographer over to our little furnished rooms and took a picture of us in costume. The next morning, we collected all the nickels we could from our friends to buy copies of the early bird edition of the paper because our names were going to be in it, and our picture. Sure enough, there was a column about two star-struck girls who crashed Ringling Brothers. It was hysterically funny. We managed to get about 20 papers each to send to our friends and relatives. And

then the pay phone in the hall started ringing!

"It was United Press, Associated Press, Movietone News, *Look* magazine, *Life* Magazine. It was just one of those fantastic things that appealed to the press, I guess. Before we knew it there were all sorts of people on our doorstep. You had to climb over garbage cans to get to these grubby rooms we lived in. They were doing 'a day in the life of a circus crasher.' Finally, Movietone News took us back to Ringling Brothers and had us show them how we were dressed and how we walked down Ninth Avenue to 57th Street, and the door we went in. And then I remember I wound up sitting across a desk from John Ringling North, Movietone News cameras grinding away.

"I remember thinking, this is such fun. Mr. North said to me, 'Why did you do this? Do you want to be a clown in the circus?' I said, 'Well, no. That's a very special talent. I don't have that particular talent.' He said 'What is it that you want to do?' 'I have to tell you, I was born in England and I have always wanted to be an American.' I was dead serious. 'To be an American you have to be in

Voigtlander, left and Vargas set up for night shooting. Opposite page: Murphy reads light.



**Murphy and Mitchell
clown it up on the
way to the circus.**

movies, be out west around horses and rodeos and you have to be in circus. And once you've done those three things then you're an American."

"Looking back on it I realize that I was a press agent's dream, but I was dead serious. This was coming from my heart. He said, 'What is it that you want to be with the circus?' 'I want to be a photographer.' So he said - what could he say? The cameras were grinding away and these news reels would be in theaters - he said, 'Very well, you can be a photographer with Ringling Brothers.'

"Cut. Print.

"That was fun' I said. 'I'll go back to school now.' He said, 'No, I'm serious. You're going to be a photographer.' I said (rather meekly), 'Oh.' I didn't know whether I should tell him then or later that I had never had a camera in my hand in my life - not even a Brownie. He told me to go down to the train and there I would meet Ted Sato and he would be in charge of me. He was the head of the photo department.

"I thought, 'Oh God, what did I do? Oh well, it ought to be interesting. I'll get to see the train before they tell me to get lost.' I went down to the train and thank God, Mr. Sato was Japanese. 'I am so glad.' He said, 'Why are you glad?' 'Because you people are supposed to be so patient.'

"Now don't you worry about a thing,' he said. 'I've been begging them for an assistant. I run this whole department by myself and I've been begging them for some help. Now, to have some qualified help. . . .' I said, 'Now wait a minute. . . .' He said, 'Here, you can have the Speed Graphic. You can have the Omega. You can have the Rolleiflex. You can have the Yashica. . . .'

"He was carrying on like that and I said, 'What are these words?' 'These are the cameras. Just pick the one you want. We shoot everything here. Everything that moves, or doesn't move, or you think might move. And sometimes you'll do the advance work on a show and of course we have new catalogues to set up and. . . .' I said, 'But Mr. Sato. . . .' And I told him.

"He was afraid if he sent me away they wouldn't give him another assistant. So he taught me how to take pictures. I travelled with the circus for nearly a year and we ended up in Mexico City," said Murphy.

In Murphy's mind Mexico City was very close to Hollywood - "about three inches on the map" - so when the winter season came and most of the circus returned to Sarasota, she decided to go to Hollywood. Mr. Sato was travelling to Japan, and asked her to look after his cameras till he returned. She agreed, and Murphy and two footlockers arrived in Hollywood by train. Of course, she didn't know anyone and had no place to stay, but she was well on her way to being an American.

Somehow she found a room and furnished it with the two trunks. Her next problem was to make a living. This was Holly-

wood and she was an actress, so she knocked on the door of Warner Bros. and told them she had been around on *On the Waterfront* and knew something about acting. Imagine their reply. Well, the other thing she knew about was photography. In Florida she had noticed that the nightclubs all had photographers roaming around taking pictures of customers and printing them up before the night was over. She thought, "I can do that."

"I went to the Sunset Strip where 'the most beautiful girls in the world pass through these portals,' and there were a lot of clubs on the Strip at that time. I went into Turner's Drugstore and made a deal to use their kitchen as my darkroom at night. I had met a few girls around town by that time and I asked them to be my nightclub photographers. They said they didn't know how to take pictures. I told them not to worry and I gave them each a camera. We covered the strip.

"Sadly, in Hollywood nobody wants their picture taken at a nightclub because they are not with whom they should be. I hadn't counted on that. . . . We couldn't have sold ten pictures."

But Murphy did meet a lot of people. "And every man I met was a producer - said he was a producer. But I had heard about these people and I was very skeptical about it. 'Uh-huh, sure you're a producer.' Then one guy insisted that he *was* a producer and that he was going to start a picture in the next couple of days. 'Can you do anything?' he asked. 'Well, sure. I take pictures.'

"He said that he worked on such a low budget that he couldn't afford pictures. Instead, they blew up single frames of the film. I thought that must be pretty cheap, not that I was making a great deal of money. This man sounded more believable than most because he wasn't telling me what a big shot he was. He was telling me how low budget the picture was. I told him I could do any number of things.

"In my mind I was flashing back to *On the Waterfront* and I said 'I know script supervising and I know props and make-up and hair. (I do make-up and hair every day!) I know wardrobe. (I get dressed every morning.)' I had watched the script supervisor enough to have a vague idea of what they do. I knew I could get a stop watch and look the part. He said 'Well, come to my office tomorrow.' I thought, 'This was an improvement over "Come to my apartment."'"

The producer's office was over at Hollywood General Studio and when Murphy arrived, she was impressed by all the activity. It looked legitimate. "In the corner was a big monkey suit and on the wall was a big production board. It looked like something was about to happen. He said, 'Okay, can you do make-up, wardrobe, props, hair and script?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Fifty dollars a week on location and you can take some stills if you don't take too many, because I'll have to buy the film.' I said, 'All right.' He said that he would need me immediately to work out some production details. That was fine with me; I didn't have the vaguest idea what he was talking about."

But she soon found out. On a \$30,000 budget the producer was to make a movie about the Abominable Snowman, among others, and Murphy did everything. Every time she saw someone doing something, she asked how they did it and why and if they needed help. Soon she was thinking, and not for the last time, "Hey, I can do that." She often heard the producer complain about the size of his budgets, but to her, \$30,000 was a lot of money and one ought to be able to make two features for that amount. Especially if "one" was Bri Murphy.

She explained to the French backer for these quickie movies that if he used the same cast and crew, shot at two locations that had completely different looks, and shot back-to-back, he could get two for the price of one.



The next thing she knew, she was making *Virgins from Venus* and *The Incredible Petrified Shrinking World*. "They are classics in bad movie making, BUT they got made and they got distributed and they made money for the Frenchman. I made both of them for \$30,000. That sent the original producer to India where he became a monk."

Ever since then she has worked steadily in the movie business. "I found that with each picture I worked on, I met probably ten new people. If you stay in touch with the ten new people, a couple of them are going to know about another project. Things started snowballing. I was still the only woman working on any of these pictures. By this time I had an apartment on Beachwood Drive in Hollywood. I insisted on living right under the sign that said Hollywood. Every day after work, since my place was central, we would all get together for a cup of coffee or a glass of beer or something and talk about the day and what was coming up. The word hadn't been invented for this yet, but we were networking."

Murphy did not get firmly fixed on a career as a cinematographer until she started

working on industrial films, first as a production manager and then as a cameraman. She started out by convincing her producers to use two cameras and they could save money if she operated one of them. That seemed acceptable because everyone figured that they would get the shot from the main cameraman. Surprisingly, the second camera work began to get a lot of attention. Murphy divided her time between industrials and any kind of work she could get on non-union features.

Within her network, people took whatever job they could on the next non-union film. They all kept their ears open for work and the agreement was that whoever had found the next pigeon could have any job he or she wanted. That was most often the cameraman. Then the cameraman chose his or her own grips, gaffers, and support crew from among the network members. The group grew to include many currently well known cinematographers – people like Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC, Laszlo Kovacs, ASC, Faoud Said, Mario Tosi, ASC, and Jim Crabe, ASC. It was this same group of people who formed Local 531 of NABET to

From left: Landon, Jr., Voigtlander, director Bill Claxton, camera operator Ken Hunter and gaffer Lon Massey III set for action.



Meinardus and Steadicam are invaluable to Heaven production.



protect themselves when working for no-budget producers with a habit of skipping town. Eventually all of them were admitted to the cameraman's union, Local 659, I.A.T.S.E. All of them – except Brianne Murphy.

Although Murphy qualified time and time again, the then business manager of the local told her, “My wife don’t drive a car and you’re not going to operate a camera. You’ll get into the union over my dead body.”

“Well,” says Murphy with a Jack Benny pause, “he died.” Soon after, she decided to try the local again and “the doors swung open.”

She was admitted as a first cameraman. Still, she weighed the decision carefully. She knew that in order to do the kind of quality work she wanted to do, she needed to be in the union. She also knew that even when her name was on the roster, she might not get work. She didn’t know anybody at the studios or any major producers. She decided the risk was worth taking, even if it was a long time between jobs.

One day NBC called the union looking specifically for a woman cameraman to shoot a documentary on breast cancer. The participants in the documentary would not allow themselves to be photographed by a male. The union gave Murphy a special waiver to do the show and her news career took off.

“We shot the cancer documentary, and NBC was so pleased with it the next day – that’s the nice thing about news: you shoot today and look at the film tonight and then it’s on

the air later that night – that I worked for them for nearly a year on a daily basis. I wouldn’t even work weekly because I was so sure my big call was going to come from the studio. I shot network news, local news, documentaries and specials,” said Murphy.

It took a while, but her big break did come. A cameraman she had worked with as a script supervisor was shooting “Columbo” and had to leave the show early. Murphy explained, “His name was Richard Glouner [ASC], and he had just won an Emmy for ‘Columbo.’ They told them that he had to replace himself with someone who could do the same quality work. He said that there was only one choice, Bri Murphy. ‘Okay, what’s his number?’ Glouner said, ‘Well, I hope you don’t hate your mother, because it’s a woman.’ They said, ‘No way are we going to put a woman on a sound stage at Universal.’ Glouner said, ‘Then I’m not picking anyone. Bri is my choice.’ Well, they were afraid not to go with me because an Emmy for Columbo was rather important, I guess.” With Columbo, Murphy’s career as a director of photography was established. “My sister asked, ‘Well, what’s the big difference between what you were doing and what you’re doing now?’ I said, ‘For some reason, now people laugh at my jokes.’”

Since then she has worked on several features, many movies of the week and other specials and a long list of television series. Then in the early 1980s Murphy joined the crew of Landon’s “Little House on the Prairie.” “I joined the company on “Little House” because of Teddy. He introduced me. Introduced? He took my film over there and screened it for them. I only knew Teddy from the ASC and because we went to video school together,” said Murphy.

...

Ted Voigtlander has a well established reputation as a gentleman and a master raconteur, not to mention as an award-win-

ning cinematographer. He came to Hollywood in the forties as a musician. He played the guitar, the trumpet and the piano and did some composing and arranging. "When I came out here the music business was getting a little icky, so I started looking for another kind of job," recalled Voigtlander. But it was his aunt who sealed his fate. His work clothes as a musician consisted of a tuxedo that by Voigtlander's own admission had seen better days.

Nevertheless, it was a vital part of his livelihood. One day his aunt came to town for a visit and stayed with him for a while in his apartment. One afternoon she was approached by an old man outside the building. The man told her that he was broke and sick, that he didn't even have a decent suit of clothes to be buried in. When Voigtlander came home later, his aunt said she hoped he wouldn't be mad at her, but she had given away his old tuxedo to a man who needed a burial suit. "That was the end of my music career."

Still, Voigtlander probably wouldn't have made it into the movie business if a friend hadn't dared him. It seems Voigtlander and some friends were sitting around one day discussing their fates and how they all wanted to make it in Hollywood. In typical one-upmanship between friends, Voigtlander said there was nothing to getting a job in Hollywood: all you had to do was call up one of the studios. "Oh yeah? Well, why don't you? I dare you," said his pal.

Voigtlander made the call and found himself on the phone with a woman at MGM who desperately needed a typist. Could he come right away? Voila! Ted Voigtlander was working in a Hollywood Studio. His job as a typist worked into a job in publicity and photography. "I ended up working with Laszlo Willinger, who was the portrait photographer brought over by L. B. Mayer from Europe with Hedy Lamarr. I was his assistant. You can't call me an assistant really because I was a



gofer for him - I swept the floor. That was where the photography bug bit. I used to borrow a camera from the studio and go out on weekends and shoot pictures. They seemed to work out pretty good. I used a 5 x 7 Graflex. Through friends in the MGM still lab, I was able to get them processed and printed. And I began to learn about photography.

"While I was working with Mr. Willinger, I used to wander the stages and watch the directors of photography work. They were the kings of the set at that time. They were the biggies. I thought, 'Boy, that's a lot more challenging than still photography.' The challenge of moving pictures is what bit me."

Voigtlander continued, "An opening came in the camera department for an equipment clerk, and I applied for it and got it. There I learned all about the mechanics of a motion picture camera. I got to the point where I was teaching people how to thread cameras and all about lenses. I was the assistant to the head of the camera department for 25 bucks a week. I finally got a break when they decided to take me on as an

assistant cameraman. I never worked as a loader or a second assistant, but went right on to a picture called *A Guy Named Joe*. Karl Freund, ASC, was the cameraman and I was his assistant. It was a picture about B-25s with Spencer Tracy, Irene Dunne and Van Johnson." It was 1943.

"I have a bachelor's degree in bacteriology from the University of Washington. Basically, I wanted to be a pathologist. I probably ended up just as well. I like what I'm doing. I was accepted at Northwestern Medical School, but I couldn't make it financially. When I was in school I was my mother's sole support, so I did everything I could to make a buck - played football, waxed floors, played in a dance band. Anything so I could send my mother some money and put myself through college. It wasn't easy, but the main reason I'm saying this is that the college education was not thrown down the drain.

"I learned physics and chemistry and optics. I can read all kinds of technical literature and understand it. Besides I got beautiful courses in philosophy that taught me tolerance and an understanding of human behavior. I

Voigtlander, Murphy and Landon are proud of their team results.



Landon checks costume details for segment of *Highway to Heaven*.

learned psychology. That's why I have never minded answering kids' questions. I know that many of them haven't had the advantages I've had. I enjoy teaching. I just remember me, is all," said Voigtlander.

He remembers the people who took the time to teach him or at least let him observe them at work. Voigtlander feels he was most influenced by the likes of Joseph Ruttenberg, ASC, and Robert Surtees, ASC. "Joe Ruttenberg taught me, through observation, close-up photography of women. He wasn't the world's greatest technician. As his assistant, I took care of that stuff for him. He didn't pay much attention – he lit to his eye. His pictures were beautifully balanced. He was Greer Garson's cameraman and he got four Oscars."

Voigtlander spent nearly ten years as Robert Surtees' assistant. Of Surtees, he recalls, "My first picture with Bob was *The Bad and The Beautiful*. Then I went on through *King Solomon's Mines* in Africa, then we did *The Valley of the Kings* in Egypt and we did *Oklahoma*. I started to operate on *Oklahoma*. I think you are born with an eye for composition, but I did what Bob Surtees told me to

do. I visited art galleries. I got all the art books I could and studied them.

"I tell that to kids starting out today, too – go to the art museums and see how the masters handle the subtleties of light sources and composition. Get used to the source lighting. If there is a window, that's where your light is. If there is a lamp on the table, that's where your light is. A lot of it you can be taught, but you have to have a proclivity . . .

"Surtees was not only an artist but a great technician," continued Voigtlander. "He had his own little photo lab above his garage where he did his own wash-off reliefs. He was learning all the time. He was well established, but he never stopped learning. He had a sense of humor a mile long – one hell of a guy. He won three Oscars."

Murphy and Voigtlander both are award winning cinematographers. Voigtlander has been nominated 16 times for Emmy recognition and has won three times. His first Emmy was in 1974 for "It's Good to be Alive" (the Roy Campanella story). In 1977 he won for "The Fighter" and in 1978 for "The Craftsman." Voigtlander became a director of

photography on a series called "The Islanders" when Nicholas Musuraca, ASC, fell ill. He first worked with Landon during "Bonanza" days, and then to "Little House."

Murphy's Emmy award was for a special, "Five Finger Discount." She was nominated three times. In 1982 she won an Academy Scientific and Engineering Award for the design, concept and manufacture of the MISI Camera Insert Car and Process Trailer.

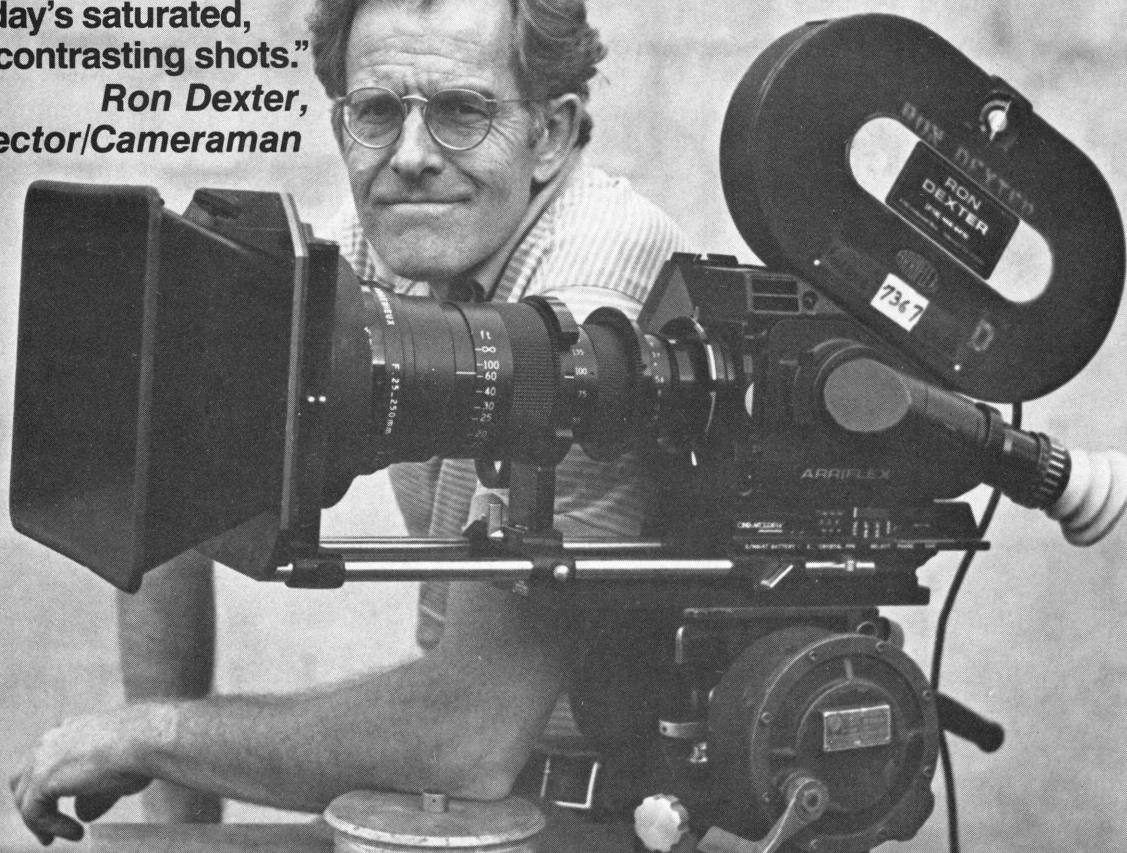
Voigtlander is hesitant to admit that he has developed any particular style over the years. He calls himself a traditionalist and explained, "I got my education with some of the finest cameramen of the day and from fine art. It was a great education on source lighting and other things. For example, if you have a good oak – let's see the oak. I learned perspective, too. If you are in a room where your subject is a certain distance from the wall, you want to make your audience feel that distance.

"If you are in a room that is dark, you still like to know something about that room. So, I use a little bit of Hollywood magic. If a guy is walking through a door into a darkened room to the other end of the room, I like to throw a little highlight on a vase or a book to give that little bit of dimension or perspective. It's always phony. There is no such thing, but you will find it even in the master painters. Where is that little light that is hitting that vase? You don't care really . . . So if there is such a thing as style, I like to have dimension and perspective," concluded Voigtlander.

Voigtlander learned the so-called glamour techniques in his early studio days, but he maintains that audiences of today are too educated. They want more realism than fantasy. They won't sit still for things like "the gauze over Garbo or Joan Crawford's shadow across her neck, chin and the top of her head. Out in the middle of the desert she'd have that! And where the hell's the tree out in the desert to do that? But that was her trademark." With a nod to Holly-

"The new Angenieux 25-250 HP is great for today's saturated, more contrasting shots."

**Ron Dexter,
Director/Cameraman**



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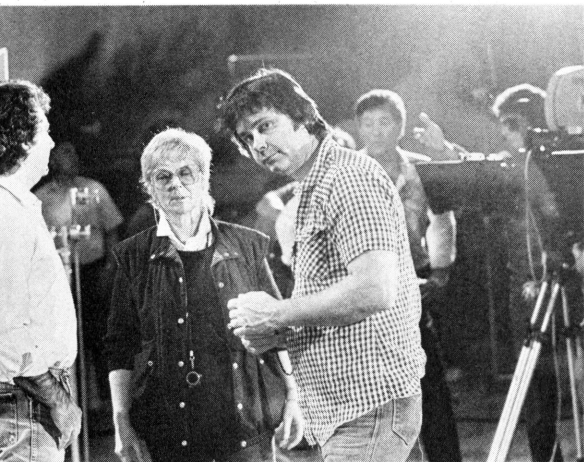
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Minimum focusing distance from image plane: 1.70m
Object angular field: 57°-3¼°
Weight: 7 lb., 8½ oz. / 3.4 kg.
Filter Size: 138mm



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Murphy at work
with crew members.

wood magic and poetic license, Voigtlander likes to be as realistic as he can. Yet, he notes, "Every Hollywood night has a full moon in it that you don't see. Where else does all that light come from? I try to break it up a bit - I use a tree branch or something and it looks a little more real.

"My feeling about photography in a nutshell: I don't want to be noticed," continued Voigtlander. "One of the best lessons on that came from a man I worked with who hadn't directed much before. Randal MacDougall wasn't an amateur, he was a screenwriter and later a producer. This picture was called *The World, the Flesh and the Devil*. We made the film in New York and when we started he brought his bottle up and we sat in the hotel room and talked. 'Ted, there is only one thing I wish you would do. I wrote this screenplay, so this is in my mind. There is only one person left in the world for about half the picture. I have only one question, if there is just one person left in the world, who the hell is photographing the thing?'

"So, the frame became a stage with a proscenium. The actor worked the frame, rather than me panning and tilting. If there was a close-up, the actor had to walk in close. It was the best lesson in the world for me on the unobtrusive camera. I want all my pictures to be that way."

Although interviewed separately, both Voigtlander and Murphy had similar things to say

about working with Michael Landon on "Highway to Heaven" and about the virtues of having two directors of photography. They agreed with Landon that adequate preparation is the key to their success. Voigtlander said, "I make notes and the art director takes stills of the locations, and then between us we keep in contact with McCray and the director about things like lenses - say we want to use a 230mm to 460mm lens. That's extra money, but we know in advance what day we will need it and we set the rental up in advance. We are fine-tuned.

"I know that when I went to Tucson to scout for an episode about an old baseball pitcher, I talked to Mike Landon and we decided how we were going to do the climactic scene. He wanted a little added suspense to build on this ball after it was pitched, so we shot at 96 frames. I knew what day we were going to do it and I arranged with Panavision for the high-speed camera. Everything is planned so that when we move into something we know exactly what we are going to do.

"They call locations practical sets. The word is wrong. There is nothing practical about them. Actuals is the word they should use. The way we work today we spend a lot of time in actual buildings or homes. Not too many companies work predominantly on studio sets any more. Instead you go out and rent somebody's home. That means that you can't do any overhead lighting. You have to fake it. You are limited - you can't take a wall out.

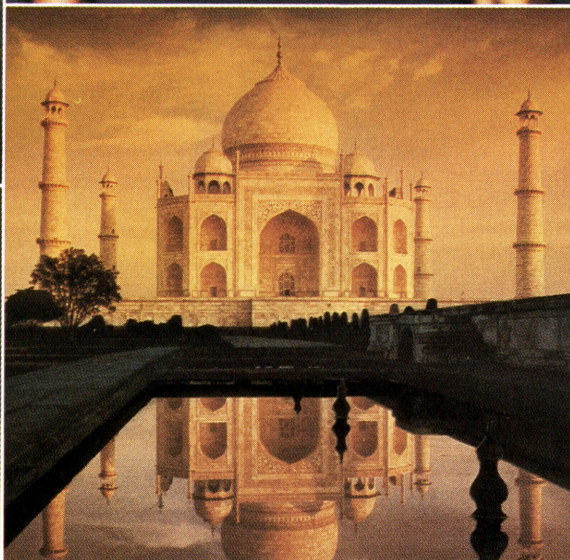
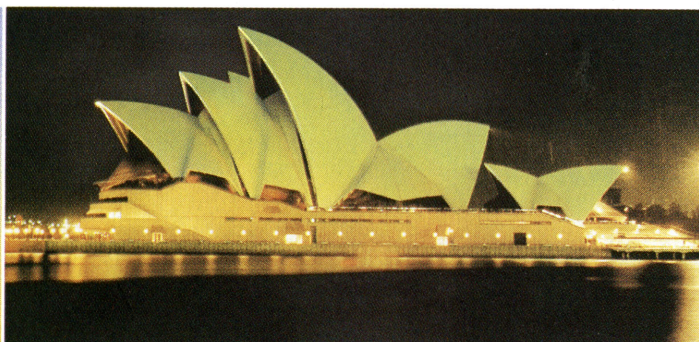
"When I am doing my scouting I make notes about the time of day that I would like to make a certain shot. Hopefully, by the time you get to shooting that scene out the window, you won't have to burn up the people inside to balance the outside. You can use filters on your windows, too, but if somebody is coming in a door by that window then you are dead. So consequently you try to work for the time of day when you get a good crosslight or backlight.

Then you get yourself in an area where you not only get good perspective - you see highlights and shadows out there - but there is a better chance of balance inside-to-outside. It means it is a little tougher to get a quality photograph in someone's home. But if you do - it's really real."

"I work from my script breakdown when I look at locations, noting special equipment that is going to be used," said Murphy on the same subject. "In scouting the location you have the advantage of planning ahead, and the chance to work with the director and find out what his intentions are in a specific scene, and what is important to him in it, so that you are highlighting that. It is wonderful to have a chance to prepare. I am sure from a director's standpoint it's good to know that he and the cameraman are in sync."

Murphy draws on all her past experience to face the challenge of television cinematography. "Because I have a production manager's background I do a breakdown of each script almost as though it was going on a board. But I don't need to put it on a board. Once I have broken it down it's in my head. I make notes on where we are in the script. Is this scene a high point? the climax? a beginning? or leading up to something? If it is in the middle of a sad section I don't want it bright and comedic looking. A background in English literature helps me pull the storyline into perspective.

"As we pick a scene out to shoot, I know what came before and what comes after. Sometimes you are dealing with mood, sometimes with color, sometimes with pace. But it is all fixed in my mind. Each scene is part of a whole. Every day I do my homework before I go to work. I refer to my original breakdown to see where the scenes fall in the layout of the story, then abbreviate the scenes because I seldom carry a script. There is always one nearby if I need to refer to it. One day Mike Landon caught me with lit-



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tle index cards with notes on them – such and such a scene comes right after a scene we had previously done and the other scene was predominantly blue. I just noted things that came to me that might be helpful when I got the set-up from Mike. He looked at the cards and teased, ‘You mind if we don’t do it that way?’

“I think each show, each story has a feeling of its own. The trick is to capture what the director wants and offer as much as I can to his idea so that I’m not fighting it.”

Murphy and Voigtlander are the only members of the camera crew that alternate. They both work with the same operators and assistants. They also work with two complete camera crews. Part of the reasoning, as Voigtlander explained it, is that there are times, particularly when the actors are involved in a dramatic scene, that it just is not a good idea to make them go through it too much. “With two camera crews, we can make our cut – the close-up and the over-the-shoulder shot – at the same time. Then we will do the reverse the same way, if we can.”

In addition to the two cameras, Landon’s crew carries a Steadicam at all times. “Many times the topography does not allow you to take the time to lay out a dolly shot. Maybe the hill leans a bit or maybe you would have to do a lot of bridging to even up the track for a dolly. With Mike Meinardus on our Steadicam, we can just jump right in there. It’s also good if we want to go through crowds of people or areas where we can’t put track – down a hallway and in a door,” said Voigtlander. “In the time it takes to lay out these things and do a dolly shot we can do a couple of takes with the Steadicam. Meinardus does a hell of a job so that you can’t really tell it from a dolly shot.”

Probably the most important aspect of work on “Highway to Heaven” is the rapport on the set. At the risk of sounding like officers in the Michael Landon fan

club, both Murphy and Voigtlander acknowledge Landon’s skill as a producer/director/writer/actor. “Mike Landon directs most of the episodes of ‘Highway to Heaven,’” said Voigtlander. “He’s pretty much got it worked out in his head what he wants. He’s a very bright man, very creative. But I will still say to Michael, ‘Do you want this scene dramatic, lights down? or do you just want a night interior?’ We work together and if all directors were like that, all films would be Van Goghs.”

“I like TV because of this company,” continued Voigtlander. “We treat every show as if we were doing *Quo Vadis*. We make it look as nice as it possibly can within the time constraints that we have. We are on a schedule. We only have six days for an hour of film. There are very few features that can compare with that. I’ll do ten pages in a day where a feature will do one or two, but I think I make it look just as good. The time/motion study of making a feature is, as a rule, a little boring to me. You sit around and you just don’t work as fast. I’m not sure why. I’ve done TV for so long that it’s just second nature for me to get going on the next setup before this one is all over.”

Murphy echoes Voigtlander’s respect: “The company has heart. It sounds corny, but it’s got heart. Mike Landon cares. Beyond being a caring person, what I see is one of the most talented – that’s such a hackneyed word. He’s a genius.

“When he is getting ready to to a scene, it’s like he encloses himself in a glass bubble. He visualizes the entire scene. He doesn’t shoot a master. He shoots what he’s going to use and then he goes to the angle he’s going to cut to. He knows the music cues and where they are going to go. In spite of all this ... if something magical happens that he wasn’t expecting, he’ll take it and use it.”

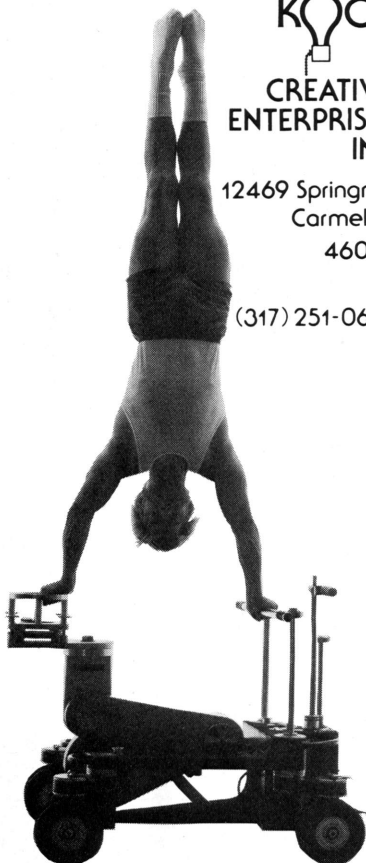
Respect seems to be mutual, because according to Landon, “We rely a great deal on

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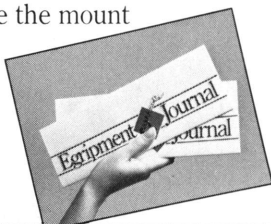
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setting a mood for a show with the way the show is photographed. The thing I like about both Bri and Ted, aside from their great ability, is that they are not afraid to be bold and to try a lot of things when I ask them to. They are thinking all the time, too. They always come in with good ideas and suggestions on how to improve the product. So it's not just 'Let's go in, do the day's work and go home.' That's good for the director because it makes him think, and *he* wants to come up with something. He stays stimulated and it's a good feeling. It's very good for the crew, too. Crews are no different from anybody else. They can get bored if you do the same thing day in and day out. But there is always something interesting to try, and that's why we get a good audience at dailies with the crew. They are anxious to find out how things turned out."

Voigtlander and Murphy like what they do and the people they do it with. They work hard, the hours are long, the schedule rigorous, but the fun factor remains high. Murphy expressed part of her personal feelings about her work, "I enjoy episodic television. I enjoy facing each challenge as it comes up. Solving it and going on with it. Partly it's my early feature experience and also my news experience. Each shot, each situation, each director, each story has its own problem . . . It's still magic to me. I hope I never lose that sense of wonder." △

(Nora Lee is a regular contributor to the pages of this publication.)

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You're probably wondering what a guy like me is doing in an embarrassing position like this.

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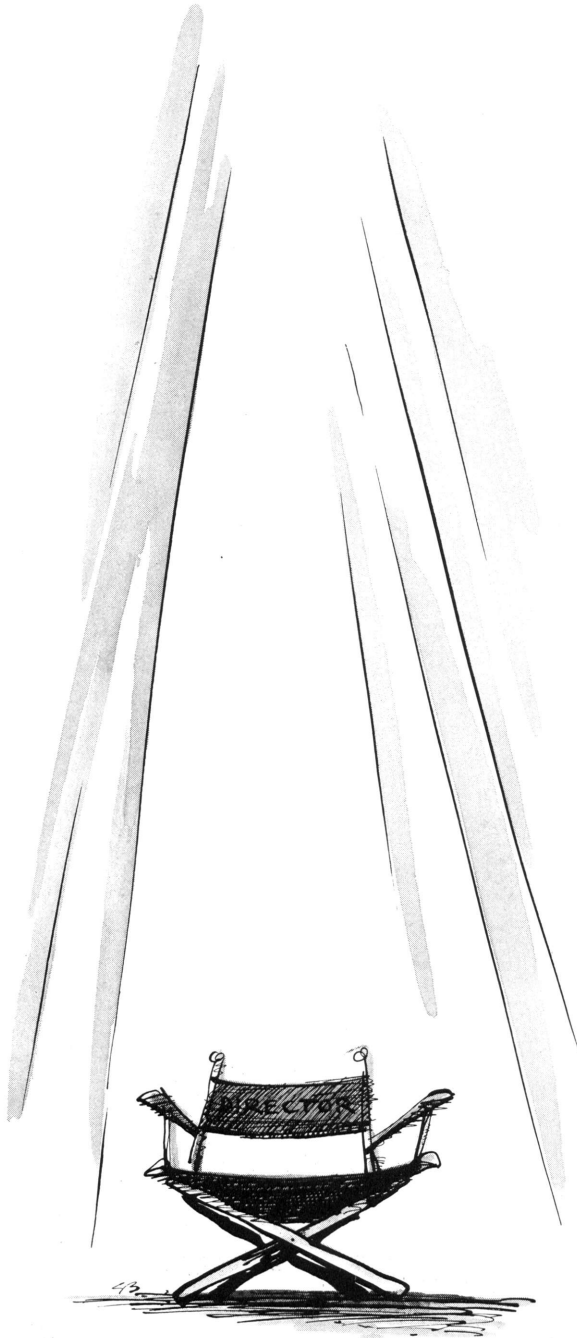
But like anyone else, I wanted a little more out of life.

Sure, my photography provided me with all the basics — a modest condominium, an Audi in the standard shade of steel grey, and a summer home in the standard, trendy summer community.

Yet the one thing I wanted, more than anything else, was to become a director.

So I faithfully followed all the laws: I sent my rep to assertiveness training school, had myself paged in all the best restaurants, sent black jackets with

my name in day-glo orange letters to every AD who promised me boards. And after all that, something remarkable happened. Nothing. I turned to scientology, to numerology, to psychiatry...even to things



Black Book the chair.

that didn't end in 'y', like religion and meditation.

Finally, I turned to the Black Book.

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That's when all the shooting started.

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It happened in Phoenix...it happened in Atlanta...it happened in Toledo... in Kalamazoo.

I went on a wild rampage, an endless uncontrollable shooting spree, leaving a trail of film from coast to coast.

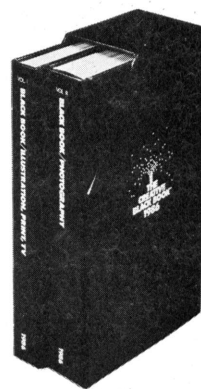
And finally, after many months, it all caught up with me. Everything I did was brought before a jury of my peers. At the Clios, the One Show, Cannes, the CA.

I have to say, I got what I deserved. Enough statuettes to cover the mantels of both my fireplaces, more certificates than other people get in a lifetime, and a reel that could convince every AD they got the right man.

If you're like me—if you're not satisfied with your lot in life, if you want a little more—let this be a lesson to you.

Okay, I gotta go now.

Got to do my last meal. The crew's already eaten.
Now it's my turn.



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Ran

Takao Saito, Masaharu Ueda & Asakazu Nakai

by Bob Fisher

In the 57 year history of the Academy Awards, there has been only one previous occasion when a cameraman from Japan has been nominated for an Oscar. That was 15 years ago, in 1970, when Sin-asku Humeda, Masamichi Satoh and Osami Fuyara shared an Oscar nomination with Charles Wheeler, ASC, for *Tora! Tora! Tora!*

That, of course, was more of a melding of cinematographic efforts by Wheeler and his Japanese counterparts than a collaboration. Wheeler told the visual story from the American perspective, while Humeda, Satoh and Osami shared responsibility for principal photography for the sequences which tell the Japanese side of the raid on Pearl Harbor.

Ran is a different story. Takao Saito, Masahura Ueda and Asakuzu Nakai collaborated to help audiences around-the-world to visualize an epic story about feudal Japan directed by Akira Kurosawa. The central character is a powerful but aging warlord who decides to appoint the eldest of his three sons to rule over the territories which he has spent a lifetime conquering.

The "great lord" orders his other sons to serve as faithful vassals, and proclaims that he will retire with a personal bodyguard of 30 trusted samuri. The announcement is made on a rolling plain with only the great lord, his sons, several neighboring warlords, and a court jester, who serves as his faithful, if sometimes reluctant companion, present. They all play prominent roles in the unfolding story.

In addition to establishing the basis for the story, Kurosawa uses this opening sequence to introduce the "look," which characterizes *Ran*. There is an extremely wide master shot revealing the scope of the plains, framed by whitecapped mountains far off in the distance. The images are crisp, clear and sharp providing a sense of reality rather than illusion.



Slate gray clouds roll across a leaden sky, and swirls of dust in the background give visual hints of a gathering storm. Splashes of black, white, blue and yellow characterize the costumes of characters who are clearly destined to become adversaries. This use of color provides threads of visual continuity as they identify banners and clothing associated with the various armies which will later roll through the plains and ravage the castles of the territory so painstakingly joined by the great lord.

Kurosawa, who has directed more than 30 films (*Rashomon*, *Seven Samuri*, etc.) during the past 40 years, has often been quoted as saying "the essence of cinema is showing people what they want to see."

He uses the camera as an unobtrusive observer. The point-of-view is that of an impassive participant. Kurosawa, at age 75, has the patience to wait for nature to provide settings which he visualizes in his mind's eye. His attention to the smallest details is seen in a willingness to reshoot scenes time and again until everything is perfect.



Above: Pageantry and color of the Far East are captured magnificently in scenes like this. Left: A once serene kingdom falls into chaos as the castle is destroyed.

Kurosawa's film crew serves as an extension of the director and the imagery that he is painting with light and shadows. Point-of-view is established by precise composition and careful placement of cameras, often at eye level.

There is very little obvious movement of cameras except in a few selected sequences



Above: *The vengeful Lady Kaede (Meiko Harada) threatens the life of her brother-in-law. Left: Lord Hedetora (Tatsua Nakadai), disoriented, leaps from a parapet at the ruins of Azusa Castle. Below: Costumes, settings and characterizations of Ran create an ambience very unlike that of Western productions.*



where Kurosawa wants the audience to see a scene from a particular perspective. It seems apparent that key members of the film crew have worked with him many times before. Their reactions to his intentions appear to be instinctive.

Saito was the number one cameraman, though he worked as an element of a well-oiled machine with Nakai and Ueda. There is frequent use of multiple cameras, including a number of massive battle scenes with lines of cavalry charging into massed musketry, and sackings of palaces involving hundreds, if not thousands of extras.

In these very difficult scenes, Saito and his associates are called upon to provide disciplined coverage, anticipating the director's passion for perfection. *Ran* could be looked at as a series of individual frames, each perfectly composed and true to life. Colors are vivid, and never gratuitous. They always serve a purpose, establishing moods, and identifying characters.

The tools chosen by Kurosawa are Panaflex cameras, with prime and wide angle lenses more typically evident than zooms, and Eastman color negative film 5247 and Eastman color high-speed negative film 5294, used to faithfully record the subtle imagery.

The Eastman look is evident in the clean blues and sharp images, and the deep focuses which accurately portray the broad vistas. If the story sounds familiar, it should be. It is King Lear placed in another culture. There is filial loyalty and betrayal, son against father, brother against brother, husband against wife, tragedy and bloodletting, and the gradual but violent unraveling of the tapestry which the warlord has spent his lifetime weaving.

While the use of backgrounds and settings is impressive, the main focus is clearly on the characters, who come across as flesh and blood, and true to life.

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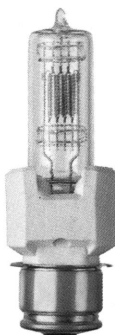
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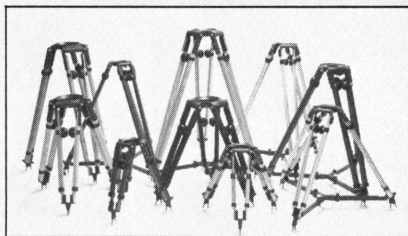
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The morale is clear even without reference to subtitles: There are dues to pay, and scores to settle, for the price which the warlord exacted from the people he has ruled during his lifetime. As the story unfolds Kurosawa uses the camera to bring the warlord into increasingly sharp focus. The great lord becomes almost transparent through the apparent use of white makeup, almost a kubuki mask, as the story draws to its inevitable conclusion.

Nevertheless, there is very little use of visual gimmickry, e.g. in one scene, the great warlord awakens, lost on the plains, and the sky appears green to him. He thinks he is dead. The tragedy, by and large, is told faithfully, and the depiction of feudal Japan smacks of reality. *Ran* leaves a lasting impression.

It is obvious that Saito and his associates have made a contribution which is well-worth sharing. It is also obvious that if this is a true representation of the state of the art as it is practiced by cinematographers in Japan, it won't be another 15 years before the Academy takes notice again. △



Things to Come . . .

Big Trouble in Little China was a challenging undertaking for all concerned, including Dean Cundey, ASC, who is director of photography for the project and also for Boss Film Co., whose main concern is the special effects. We will have detailed stories on this production in the near future.



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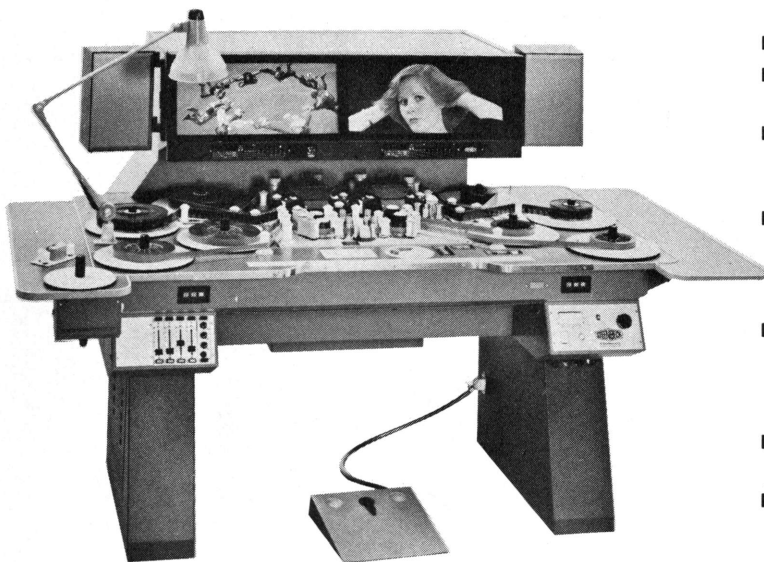
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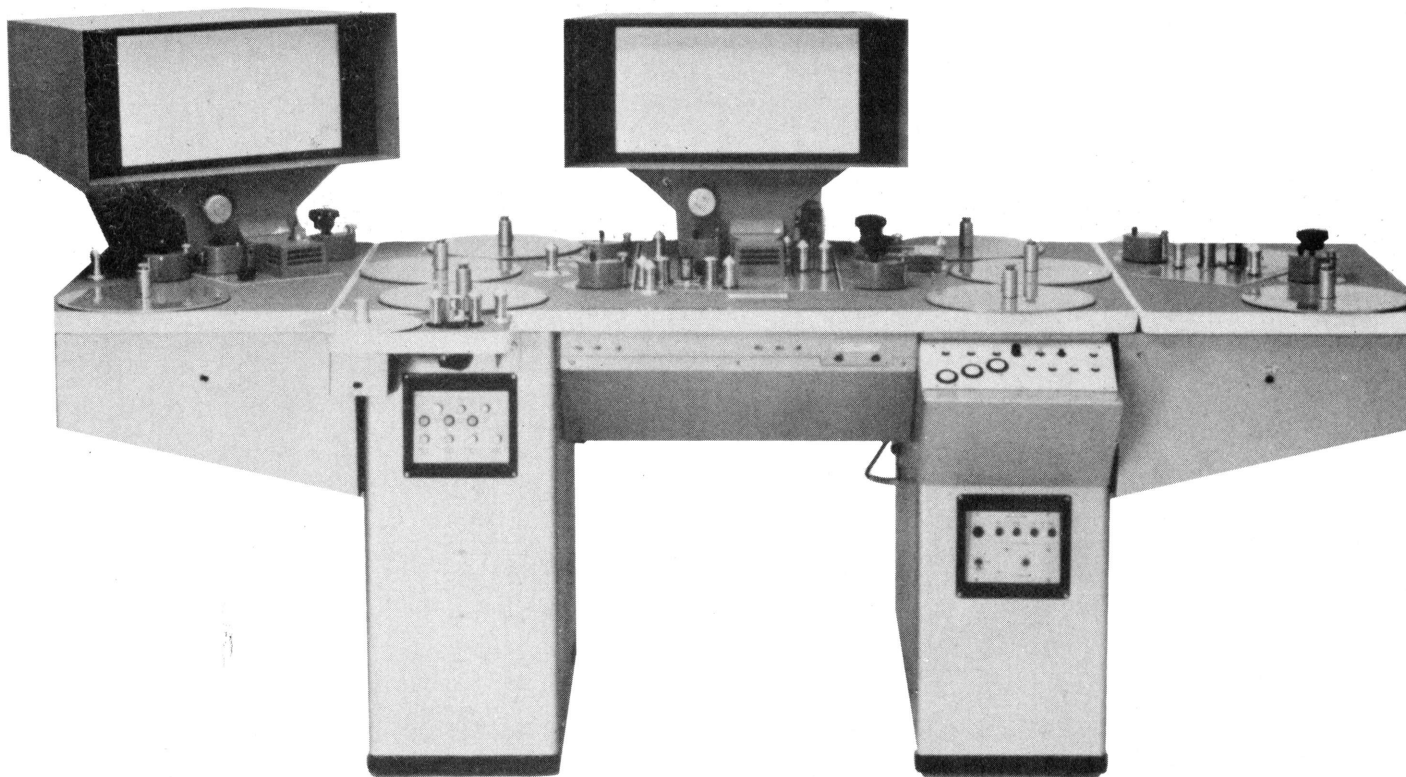


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Witness

John Seale, ACS

by Robert S. Birchard

If everything had gone according to plan, John Seale would never have received the Academy nomination for his work as cinematographer on *Witness*. Director Peter Weir was planning to go into production on a film version of Paul Theroux's novel *The Mosquito Coast* as *Witness* was being prepared. But *The Mosquito Coast* project suddenly fell through, and it was only then that producer Edward S. Feldman approached Weir with the idea of directing *Witness*. Seale, who had worked with Weir as a camera operator on *Gallipoli* and as the second unit cameraman on *The Year of Living Dangerously*, went with Weir from *The Mosquito Coast* to *Witness*.

With a short prep time of seven weeks, Weir and Seale set out to bring to the screen this story of a Philadelphia cop who hides in a Pennsylvania Dutch community to save his own life and to protect the Amish child (Lukas Haas) who was the only witness to a murder. Still, although Weir felt that *Witness* was "half-way good," it was not a film project he felt passionately about. As he told interviewer Roderick Mann, "... I decided it was a good idea not just to make films which obsessed me. I wanted to be like those directors in the '40s who took assignments from their studios and got on with them."

Witness was the first American film for both Weir and John Seale, and although much in the Australian experience parallels the American, the Amish community which maintains its 18th century traditions and eschews all modern conveniences is unique to the United States. Weir was intrigued with the clash of cultures the film's script presented, and he was determined to make the Amish life part of the fabric of the film not just a backdrop for the action. Weir built up the Amish aspect of the story, and much of the film's power derives from presenting the disparate elements of 20th century and 18th century life



Atmosphere of Witness is expressed with scenes such as those of the Amish farm people and the Pennsylvania fields. Center: McGillis, Ford, Brent Jennings and young Haas. Below: A wounded Harrison Ford is treated by Kelly McGillis and the village doctor.





An impossible love springs between the two principals of Witness. Interior scene is typical of Seale's award-winning frames all through the picture.



and customs with a sense of personal involvement while maintaining a moral ambiguity that is at times unsettling.

Although Weir employed former members of the Amish church as advisors on the film, there was a great deal of controversy on its initial release. Some felt that *Witness* exploited the Amish community, but in general audiences have been sympathetic to the filmmakers' attempts to present the Amish and their deeply-held beliefs with dignity and sincerity.

For John Seale *Witness* provided a unique photographic opportunity, and he took full advantage of the possibilities. The cold, hard-edged, and claustrophobic city is contrasted with the warm, open, and peaceful life

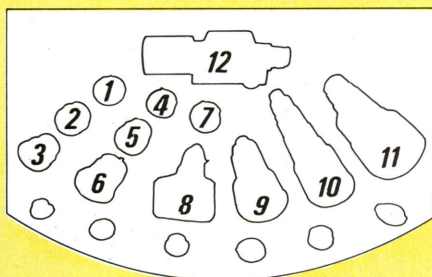


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of the Pennsylvania Dutch country. There are moments when the film takes on a documentary quality – as in the barn-raising sequence; or delights in a sense of shared humanity – the dance between Kelly McGillis and Harrison Ford; or chills with brutality – the murder in the train station restroom. Seldom does a cinematographer have the opportunity to blend such different visual textures in a single film and still maintain a sense of realism and unity that the story demands.

John Seale’s screen credits date back to the 1976 Australian film *Death Cheaters*, but before *Witness* he was best known to American audiences through his work on *Careful*, *He Might Hear You*. Since he finished *Witness* he has completed an assignment on *The Empty Beach*, and now is in Central America working again with Peter Weir and Harrison Ford on (would you believe it?) *The Mosquito Coast*.

Communication with the company is often difficult – “you can only hear every fifth word on the phone” – but Seale is very pleased with the Academy’s recognition of his efforts on *Witness* and with the nominations for Weir and Harrison Ford and for the others who contributed to the film’s success, and reportedly there was quite a celebration in Belize when the filmmakers received word of the nomination.

It took awhile for Paramount publicity to track down John Seale, but a telex finally reached the globe-trotting cinematographer.

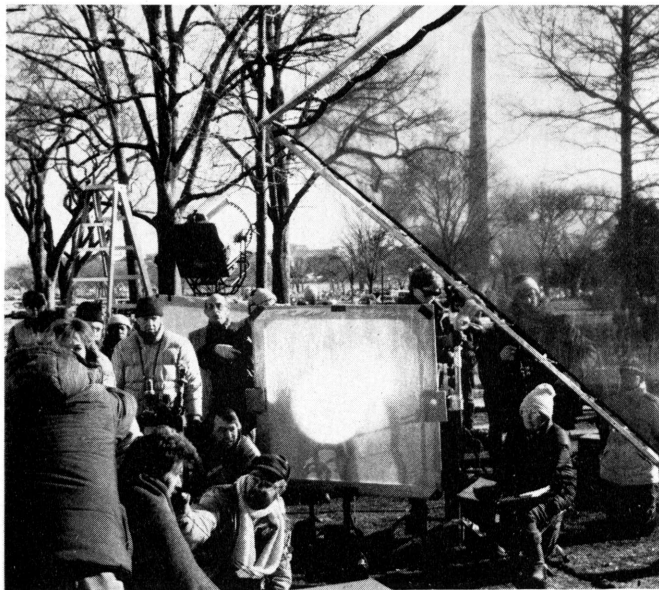
“The nomination,” he responded, “represents an exciting recognition of the enthusiasm and support of the entire crew during the making of *Witness*. My congratulations to all nominees and their crews for their considerable achievements.” △

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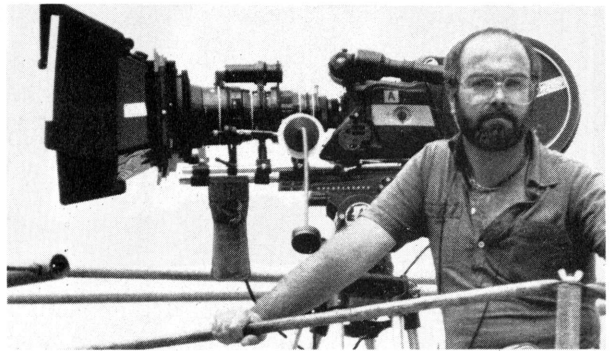
As Director of Photography, I met Carl Porcello for the first time upon arrival in the U.S. from Israel 8 years ago. Since that time, I have relied on his camera and lighting equipment, as performance and service are an important product in achievement of my ultimate product.

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Actor Martin Sheen and Director of Photography, Hanania Baer, kneeling. SAMARITAN on location in Washington, D.C.

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Hanania Baer, Director of Photography
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PRINCE OF BEL AIR

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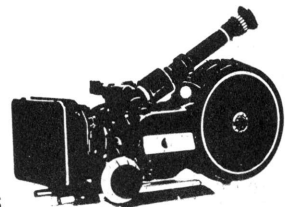
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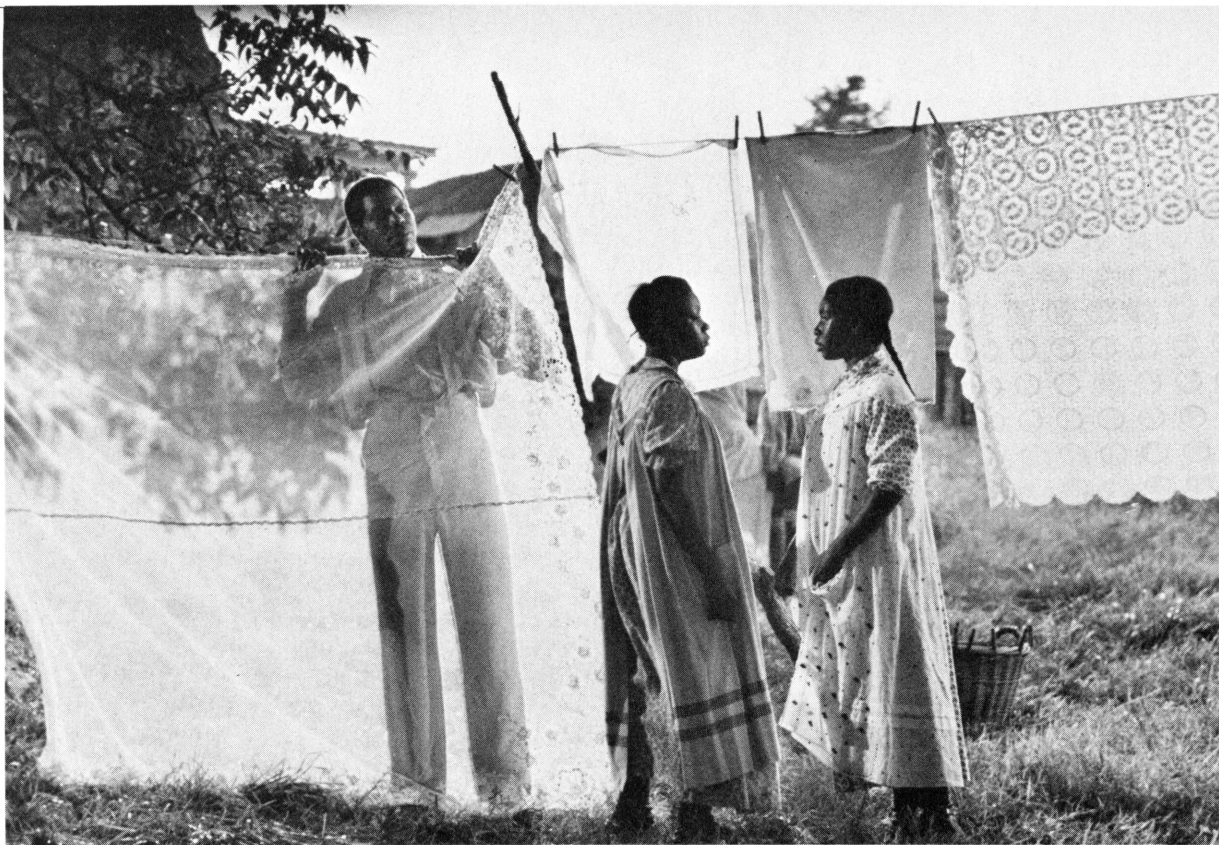


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The Color Purple

Allen Daviau, ASC

by George Turner

Alan Daviau, ASC, earned a second Academy nomination for his work in *The Color Purple*, his latest collaboration with producer-director-writer Steven Spielberg. Daviau was nominated previously for another Spielberg production *E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial*.

Born in New Orleans during World War II, Daviau has spent most of his life in Los Angeles. After a frustrating time of trying to find work in the film studios, he worked first in camera stores and then in film labs, trying to learn all he could about equipment and the needs of the cinematographer. He bought a 16mm

Beaulieu camera in 1966 and became a free-lance cameraman, shooting local television commercials and rock band promotional films for recording companies. The latter—forerunners of the currently popular rock videos—contained some unusual techniques that attracted atten-

tion, and at the same time he built a good reputation with his commercials. He graduated to national commercials filmed in Hollywood, New York and Chicago.

He also made his mark in the documentary and educational fields. The David Wolper production, *Say Goodbye*, which he helped to photograph, received an Academy nomination for best feature documentary. Several "Movie of the Week" features for television established him as a director of photography who could deliver feature quality on a 19-day schedule. Steven Spielberg hired him to photograph *Amblin'*, a short subject which started the young director's professional career. After Daviau received his IATSE designation, Spielberg had him shoot new sequences for the revised edition of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

From relative obscurity, Daviau became famous in one swoop as director of photography of the phenomenally successful *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* in 1982. It was his first really "big" picture and he made the most of the opportunity. It has a deliberate photographic style in which the use of light itself creates the spectacular aspects of the show. Yet it had to present its fantasy within the context of reality to achieve what Spielberg said he wanted. "It's very important with *E.T.* that everybody who saw the movie believe that *E.T.* could come into their back yards and walk into their homes to visit their children," Spielberg said. "You really can't do that if you set the stage for storybook unreal."

The challenges presented by *The Color Purple* were quite a different matter. Once again the picture had to depict reality, but without the aid of fantasy elements or special effects. Reality with an underlying current of poetry was demanded, a strange mixture of delicate images and hard edges. Most of the photography was done on location at a farm in North Carolina representing the Georgia farm of the original book.



The story covers a span of about three decades, with appropriate changes of atmosphere, settings, costume, makeup and other details. There is also a continuing shifting of mood in the course of the film, with initially unsympathetic characters mellowing gradually with time and characters who have been suppressed slowly emerging to become dynamic, self-respecting personalities.

The central figure of the film is Celie, a black girl who isn't blessed with physical beauty or education but who eventually becomes a strong and admirable woman. The book by Alice Walker upon which the screenplay is based is told in the form of a series of "letters to God" written by Celie in a naive but touching style. The film maintains this viewpoint throughout.

Daviau was able to become involved in the pre-production work while location scouting and production designing were under way. He believes in working closely with the production designer, in this instance Michael Riva, in establishing the picture's style of lighting and camerawork.



He recognized that his first duty was toward the clarity of the story, but that the delineation of the characters would be of equal importance.

Daviau photographed most of the exteriors in the morning and during the "magic hour." The light on location ranged from stark to soft, the latter being the result of unusual weather conditions producing abnormally moist days. Two camera crews using Panaflex Golds were employed on location, one to film the primary scenes and the other (under supervision of operator Eric Engler) to provide extra coverage as well as serve as a second unit filming weather and lighting changes for intercutting. These atmospheric shots figure prominently in the visual flow of the picture, establish-

Above: *Shug* (Margaret Avery) leads *Celie* (Whoopi Goldberg) out of the "jook joint" when a fight breaks out. **Left:** Daviau "reads" the North Carolina sun. **Opposite page:** *Mister* (Danny Glover), married unhappily to young *Celie* (Desreta Jackson, center), has designs on her sister *Nettie* (Akosua Busia, right). **Composition here symbolizes the family rift that will result.**



Whoopi Goldberg ages convincingly, thanks to collaborative efforts of make-up artist and cinematographer.



ing moods and providing transitional tissue.

Eastman 5247 and 5294 were utilized throughout. Daviau rated the 47 for daylight at ASA 64 and rated the 94 at ASA 200 for daylight and ASA 250 for tungsten. With the exception of an 85 filter, which he feels helps to give him the position on the light printing scale that he likes, Daviau seldom uses color correction filters in the field. A former lab man himself, he prefers to work closely with the lab experts to achieve a properly balanced color job. During location filming he kept in

daily contact with Deluxe labs, and he worked closely with color timer Jim Schurmann in producing the final prints.

The interior set of the "jook joint" – which was constructed on a sound stage at Universal City – provided the ambience for some of the most unusual cinematography. The authentic recreation of a country nightclub of 60-odd years ago was designed without windows and lighted in some scenes by setting sunlight coming in through spaces between the boards and into a screened porch area and in others by the simulated light of kerosene lanterns. The actual lamplight was provided by high intensity halogen lights concealed on the backs of the lanterns. Lightweight R-40 mushroom globe lights placed in the rafters and gelled completed the inside light sources, with outside and backdrop lights provided by conventional units.

The atmosphere of the "jook joint" set was one of congestion, heat and humidity – all of which are apparent in the movie. Despite the crowded conditions, camera fluidity was maintained in

these sequences, utilizing dolly tracking and Steadicam techniques. Some of the most memorable scenes in the sequence are closeup studies of Celie (Whoopi Goldberg) in which her features are key-lighted by one of the tiny high-intensity halogen bulbs concealed on her table. Daviau felt that the "jook" scenes, which were the first shots made, set the tone of the entire film and provided the key to the treatment of the Celie character throughout.

Photographing the characters in their aging makeups, as conceived to perfection by Ken Chase, was an important consideration. Because the general photographic style of the picture demanded a natural look for the characters, the natural reflectivity of the skin was relied upon to bring out the features. The same effect had to be maintained in the later scenes, when the actors were made up to appear 30 years older than in the early scenes. "To keep the skin from going dead" was, Daviau said, "no easy task."

Most of Spielberg's pictures are storyboarded in detail, but there are occasions when he deviates from this practice. *E.T.* was one, for the reason that a less restrictive approach was needed when working with a cast made up largely of children. *The Color Purple* presented a similar problem because most of the players had never acted in movies before. "I was afraid the storyboards would tie me down to pre-conceived ideas that would no longer be relevant once the cast got together and began performing their hearts out," Spielberg explained. Referring to the film as "an emotional journey," Spielberg said that "Allen and I were very gentle to everybody."

Three weeks were spent in making the interiors at Universal which included the "jook joint," the upstairs rooms of Mister's house, and the "birthing shed" where Celie's daughter is born. Eight weeks were spent on location. The final negative cost was around \$15 million. Δ

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Out of Africa

David Watkin

by George Turner

One of last year's more successful pictures, both critically and financially, was *Out of Africa*, an adaptation of a book by Isak Dinesen telling of her years in Kenya. The author was the Danish Baroness Karen Blixen (Dinesen was her pen name) and she was best known for her remarkable short stories, which often dealt with the supernatural.

Other events in the film were based upon her "Shadows on the Grass" and a biography by Judith Thurman, "Isak Dinesen: Life of a Storyteller," plus other sources. There are flaws: the picture is overlong and Robert Redford is miscast as an English hunter, yet there are so many things "right" about the production as to give it great strength.

One of its greatest assets is the cinematography, which is the work of England's David Watkin. Director Sidney Pollack and the strongly opinionated Watkin were often at loggerheads with opposing viewpoints as to how things should be done, but *both* men have been singled out for honors because of their contributions to the film. It is truly an example of the old adage that the film speaks for itself. Watkin's distinctive approach to lighting and composition has been demonstrated in the past in such diverse pictures as *The Devils*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Jesus of Nazareth*, and *Return to Oz*, all of which are anything but visually conventional.

Pollack wanted to shoot anamorphically for a wide screen effect, but Watkin convinced him he would never get the sharpness or depth that could be obtained with spherical lenses. The proof is on the screen: the plains of Kenya shimmer with heat and distance, lush and colorful in spite of the glaring equatorial light which bakes the grasslands pitilessly. Three Arriflex cameras were used, all fitted with a complement of Zeiss superspeed lenses.

Agfa 320 stock was used for the exteriors and Eastman



5247 was the choice for interiors. There is a seeming paradox here: the 320 negative, with its ASA rating of 320, is one of the highest speed films available, being highly favored for its ability to register good images in situations where lighting is almost nil. The 5247 is a film of moderate speed at ASA 100. Watkins' rationale is that the Agfa looks its best at full exposure, so he rates it at ASA 200 instead of 320. Kodak has raised the 47 to ASA 135. There is, therefore, only one stop difference separating the two films when so rated. The fine grain of the 320, its softness coupled with increased contrast, and a wide exposure latitude were factors which influenced Watkin in favoring the 320 for exterior work. The ability of the 5247 to yield perfect blacks made it ideal for the interiors.

A characteristic warm, golden glow lends a romantic aura to the exterior scenes. A kinship to this effect was achieved in the interiors, in which the warmth of firelight, oil lamp light, and even electrical lighting was utilized to carry through the mood of a story



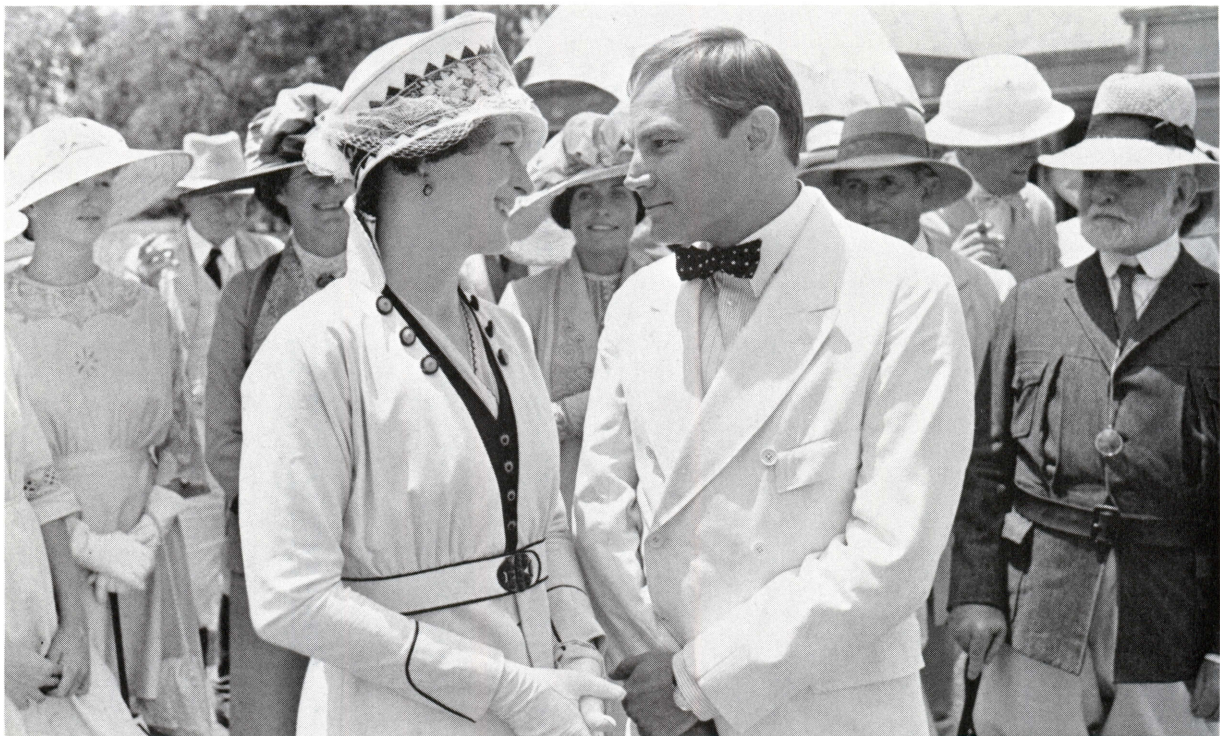
Above: *The Countess* helps in the harvesting of coffee beans. Left: David Watkin on location.

of love. For day interiors, Watkin lighted from outside, simulating the direct rays of the sun with HMI's with fill light provided by white card reflectors.

A sheet of hammered brass reflecting numerous small lights was used to simulate the warm glow of firelight.

To maintain the feminine point of view from which the story is told, as well as to carry a sense

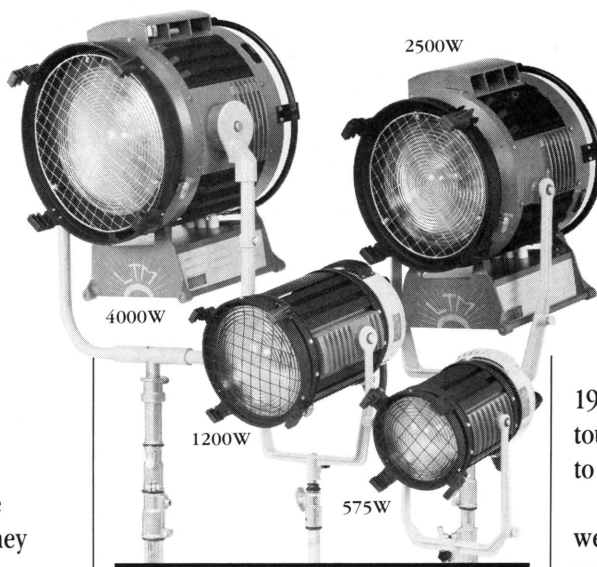
Bror (Brandauer) and Karen (Streep) exchange wedding vows in Nairobi. Below: Despite wartime restrictions, Karen and her household entourage trek across the veldt to visit her husband.



of non-contemporary timelessness in depicting the land, there is a minimum of crane work and an avoidance of obvious technical intrusions. The male principals, Robert Redford and Klaus Maria Brandauer, are depicted as they would be seen by the leading woman/author, (Meryl Streep) and the vastness of Kenya is shown as it is described by the countess. There are no concessions to the land as scenery for the tourist, no travel brochure prettiness. The beauty and majesty of the land are brought out naturally, as part of the storytelling, rather than as a travelogue attached to a story film. △

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Murphy's Romance

William A. Fraker, ASC

by George Turner

Had Norman Rockwell lived in Arizona instead of New England, his paintings for the Saturday Evening Post would have had much of the look achieved by director of photography William A. Fraker, ASC, in *Murphy's Romance*. This subtly romantic, basically realistic quality is more difficult to achieve than are the more flashy, obviously "arty" effects, whether the artist is painting with oils or with light. The movie is irresistibly charming.

Visually, *Murphy's Romance* is an artist's vision of reality. The show is a romantic comedy with serious overtones, dealing with a recently divorced young woman (Sally Field) who moves to an Arizona horse ranch with her 12-year-old son (Corey Haim). She becomes involved romantically with the town druggist (James Garner), a widower, and is again wooed by her handsome ex-husband (Brian Kerwin). Although he is a ne'er do well, the ex- is not a villain in the usual sense; it's impossible to hate him. There is no real animosity among the characters, no violence or revenge or melodramatic gestures. The comic moments bring smiles and chuckles, not belly-laughs. A challenge to the cinematographer, to be sure.

The picture was made on location in and around Florence, Arizona, a small city with a charmingly old-fashioned appearance. next to the highway nearby is a monument to Tom Mix, the great Western star, who was killed there in a car crash. Sally Field's ramshackle ranch and Garner's drug store were constructed for the picture. The first two weeks on location were spent in rehearsals, with Fraker at the side of the director, Martin Ritt. In Fraker's opinion, this advance preparation (which was unique in his experience) paid off by helping him visualize the scenes more fully. "Something major in the picture, dramatically and visually, came out of the rehearsals every day," Fraker has said.

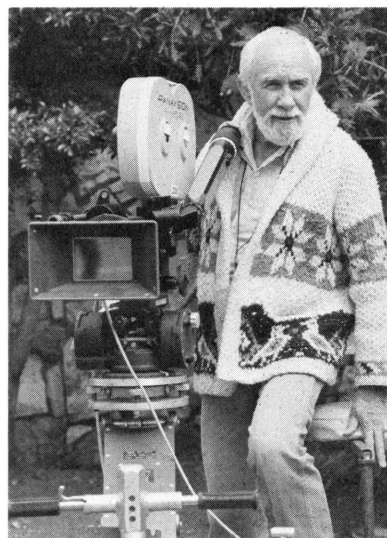
Because of extensive preparation, few takes were neces-



sary, the ratio of exposed film to final print being only about 2.5:1. Because the action, camera moves, lighting, props and other essential details had been discussed in advance, Fraker was able to avoid the disappointment common to cinematographers that comes from having to abandon preconceived ideas and work out something different at the last moment.

Fraker, who has taken time out from his photographic work to direct some noteworthy films, believes that "a cinematographer's main job is to really understand the director. It's a marriage that must take place and you must listen to what he says." Many directors, in his opinion, have had their intentions thwarted by the failure of key production personnel to understand the director's wants.

Careful preparation also made it possible to shoot much of the picture in those few moments that make up the "magic hour." These scenes, filmed in the mellow light of late afternoon and dusk, lend much of the pervading warmth that makes *Murphy's Romance* a pleasant experience for the viewer. Fraker also was careful



Above: "Magic hour" scenes lend the rural setting unusual charm. Left: Fraker on location. Opposite page: Passionate scene between Brian Kerwin and Sally Field is halted by a comically violent attack of hay fever.

at all times to capture the physical beauty of the leading players, even when shooting fast at sundown.

Fraker used Panavision cameras and prime lenses, utilizing a zoom lens only rarely. He used Kodak 5247 and 5294 stocks at their recommended ratings of ASA 100 and 400, respectively, with normal processing by MGM. The faster stock proved especially valuable in some perfectly balanced night-for-night shots in the streets of Florence. A half Harrison fog filter, a half Harrison coral and a

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- *July 1980 "On Location with 'Somewhere in Time'"
- *Aug 1980 "The Shining"
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- *Oct 1980 "Cosmos"
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- *Mar 1981 "Altered States"
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- Apr 1983 "Sophie and 1956 The Ten Commandments"
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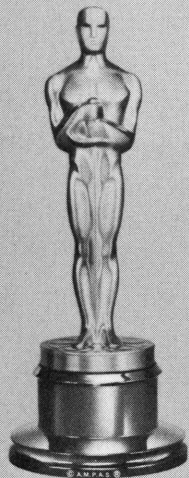
Fraker was born into the photographic field - his grandmother was a skilled photographer and his father was one of the top still men at various major studios. In the late Forties he attended film school at USC, where he came under the influence of the great filmmaker and theorist, Slavko Vorkapich, and the designer and montage expert, Peter Ballbusch. After graduation, Fraker worked as a film editor for various television production companies before being admitted to the cameramen's local.

As an assistant and operator, he worked for many of the top directors of photography - Ellsworth Fredericks on *Friendly Persuasion*, John Alton on *Lonelyhearts*, Lionel Lindon and Harold Lipstein on the *Ozzie and Harriet* TV series, Ted McCord on the *Stony Burke* series, and Conrad Hall on *The Professionals*. In 1967 he got his first feature as director of photography, Universal's *Games*, which was shot in three weeks but won high marks for its unusual cinematography. His work for Warners' *The*

Fox The President's Analyst and *Fade In* also attracted attention, but it was *Rosemary's Baby*, that put Fraker in the front rank of pictorial stylists. After this exercise in American Gothic, he showed his versatility with *Bullitt*, one of the finest realistic crime thrillers, which was shot on the streets of San Francisco. Both of these films have proved influential upon the photographic styles of numerous productions.

Fraker also directs a feature on occasion. His first directorial effort, *Monte Walsh*, with Lee Marvin, Jeanne Moreau and Jack Palance, is an excellent Western which has become a film society favorite. *Reflections of Fear*, a thriller with the late Robert Shaw and Sally Kellerman, and *The Legend of the Lone Ranger* are other Fraker-directed films. His versatility as a cinematographer is evident in his credits, which include *Paint Your Wagon*, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, *Heaven Can Wait*, 1941 (for which he also photographed the amazing miniature work), *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *War Games*, and *Irreconcilable Differences*. △

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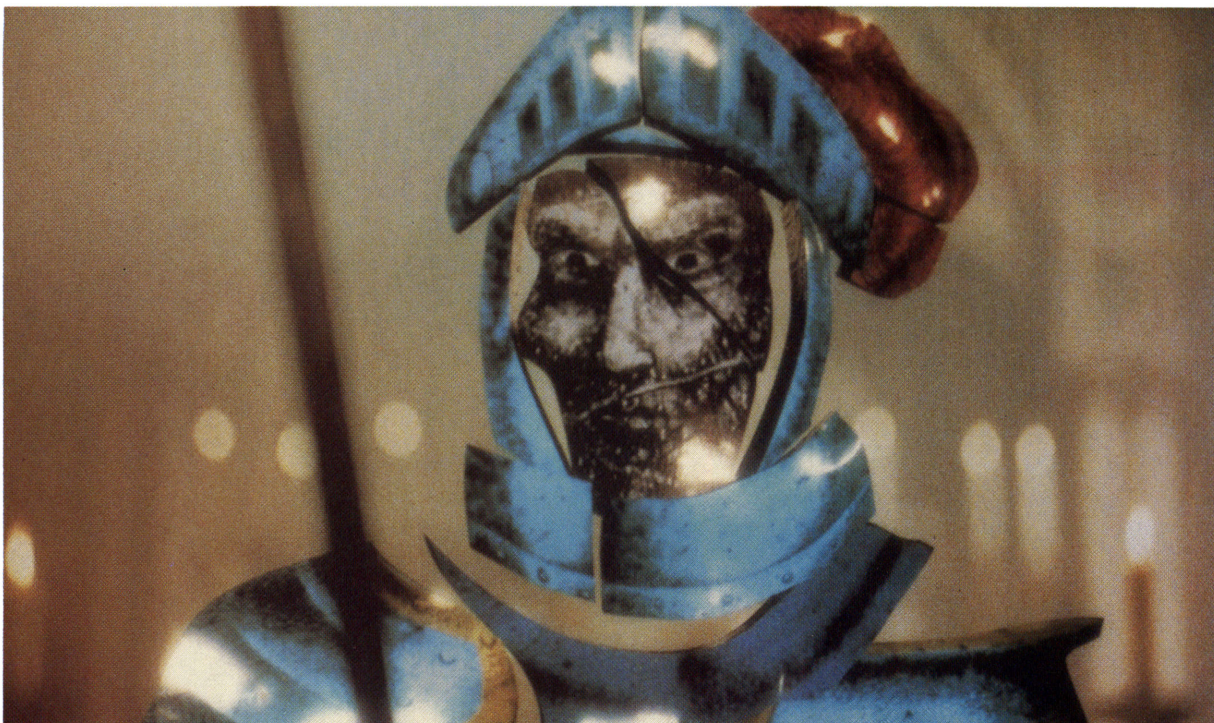
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1985 Visual Effects Nominations

by Jean Turner



This year, as is often the case, special visual effects for movies of 1985 were sometimes wasted on obscure productions and sometimes excellent productions could have utilized special effects to greater benefit. The mix never seems to strike the happy medium which satisfies the critics.

Thus, three pictures made last year were offered as prime examples of special effects artistry even though they were

largely ignored in most other categories. Nominated for Oscars were: *Young Sherlock Holmes*, *Cocoon* and *Return to Oz*.

Sharing in the nomination for *Cocoon* were Ken Ralston, Ralph McQuarrie, Scott Farrar and David Berry, of Industrial Light and Magic in San Rafael, Calif.

Cocoon gave birth to a new kind of alien that previous sci-fis have not depicted: beautiful. Actually the aliens were bodies of light clothed in human disguise. The human part was easy, with Brian Dennehy, Tahnee Welch, Tyrone Power, Jr., and other actors appearing as humans. But the light beneath the skin was a dimension possible only through special visual effects.

"*Cocoon* encompassed almost every kind of effect there is," Ken Ralston, supervisor, said in a recent interview. Besides the

alien figures, the picture called for an assortment of cloud effects. "Some were pyrotechnics, some were sculpted fiber-filled clouds and some were done in a tank," Ralston said. Multiple exposures were used to give a diffused movement to the clouds.

Stop motion cinematography was an important part of the sequences where people models interact aboard a boat which is miraculously lifted out of the water and into the spaceship headed for Antareus.

Innovative makeup appliances for peeling the skins from the aliens were a part of the project and the eventual glow of these creatures became an extraordinary challenge for the optical department, of which David Berry was supervisor.

The great pressure on opticals for the alien glow was that

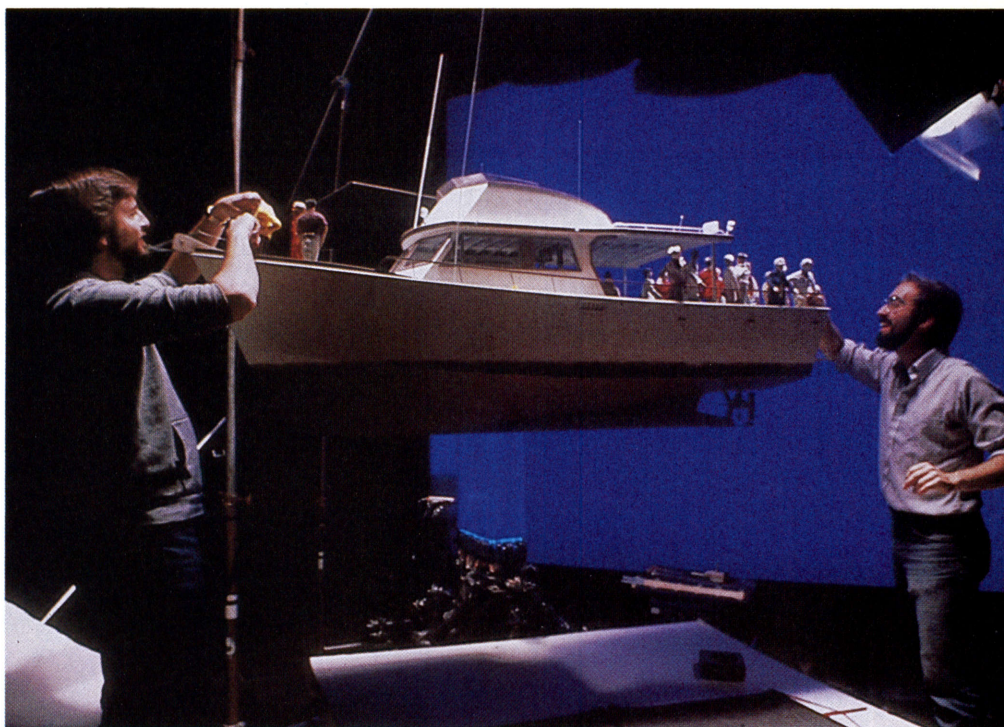
"... we generated some of the elements. We enjoyed that and it was something different, but ... after discarding all the tests we had done, we first generated just an edge glow around the persons portraying aliens. This is a common technique which we use frequently for planet glows," Berry has explained. "We just used the blue screen to generate a glow and it looked neat, something like the glows in *Tron*, but the producers wanted some steamy, vapory stuff coming off them too. So we kept that basic edge glow, then added another element we call a vapor, plus a couple of twists of our own. Our basic technique was the old idea where you do a multiple pass on some kind of action and you print that same piece of film perhaps 20 times ... each time you offset the sync by one frame, so when the subject moves you get this trailing image ..."

Ralph McQuarrie, conceptual artist for the film, was largely responsible for pre-production effects design and many of the unusual concepts (including the alien ship) which gave *Cocoon* a *something* beyond ordinary science fiction. The magical qualities were truly "wand waving" at its best and made a sensitive, funny film into the perfect fairy tale.

Another awards nominee from *Cocoon* was Scott Farrar, visual effects cameraman, who shot the very important background plates, mostly in Florida.

Return to Oz is a picture maligned by critics because it is not a happy Judy Garland trip down a yellow brick road in ruby shoes – and the public in general thought it a dark tale not really suitable for children. Be those criticisms as they may, the production was a marvel and a goodly portion of the marvel of it all were the special effects and their creators.

Will Vinton, master mind of Claymation®; Ian Wingrove, model and special effects supervisor; Zoran Perisic, visual effects consultant; and Michael Lloyd, matte supervision; shared in the nomination for *Oz* effects.



Claymation is a time-consuming process akin to stop-motion animation and typical model photography. Using miniature sets and specially formulated clay, the film is shot one frame at a time. Between frames sculptor/animators resculpt the clay. A motion control camera is used but the heart of Claymation is the hand done sculpting of the figures one frame at a time. Says Vinton, "We work off a miniature set very much as if it were miniature photography and model work, except that we add a dimension. We bring the set to life within itself."

Perisic, who is a specialist in front projection technique, is responsible for the special process known as Zoptics. He was the master mind of the flying sequences in *Oz*, using his own process. It had already been well established on such features as *Superman* and the television series, "The Greatest American Hero."

Wingrove and Lloyd of Thorn-EMI studios were also named in the awards nominations for *Oz*. Wingrove was model and special effects supervisor and Lloyd, matte supervisor.



Ken Ralston, left, and Tony Laudati at work on boat and people models. Below: An "enlightened" alien from *Cocoon*.

Claymation gave *Oz* its unusual aspect with the stone-come-to-life illusions and an evil king of a material emphasizing harshness even as it seemed to breathe. Magic of many kinds of visual effects lent the fantasy land of *Oz* its proper atmosphere throughout.

A delightful picture from the Spielberg forces is *Young Sherlock Holmes*, a highly original "prequel" to the hundreds of Sherlock Holmes movies that have hit the screens since 1903. The film is prefaced by a printed *apologia* for departing from the Conan Doyle canon in which we learn that Dr. John Watson met the enigmatic consulting detective when both were mature men shortly after Watson was invalidated out of



The Gump flies à la the Zoptic process. Below: The Nome King from Return to Oz as he is about to devour a settee. The king, alive and moving, is really made of clay.



military service in India. In this fanciful version, the doctor-writer and the future "world's only consulting detective" meet as school-boys and embark upon an adventure at least as amazing as anything recorded in the canon.

The grand finale, which was a bit too Indiana Jonesish for many Holmes followers, pits the boys and a girl friend against a group of religious fanatics in a pagan temple in the bowels of the earth beneath merrie olde England!

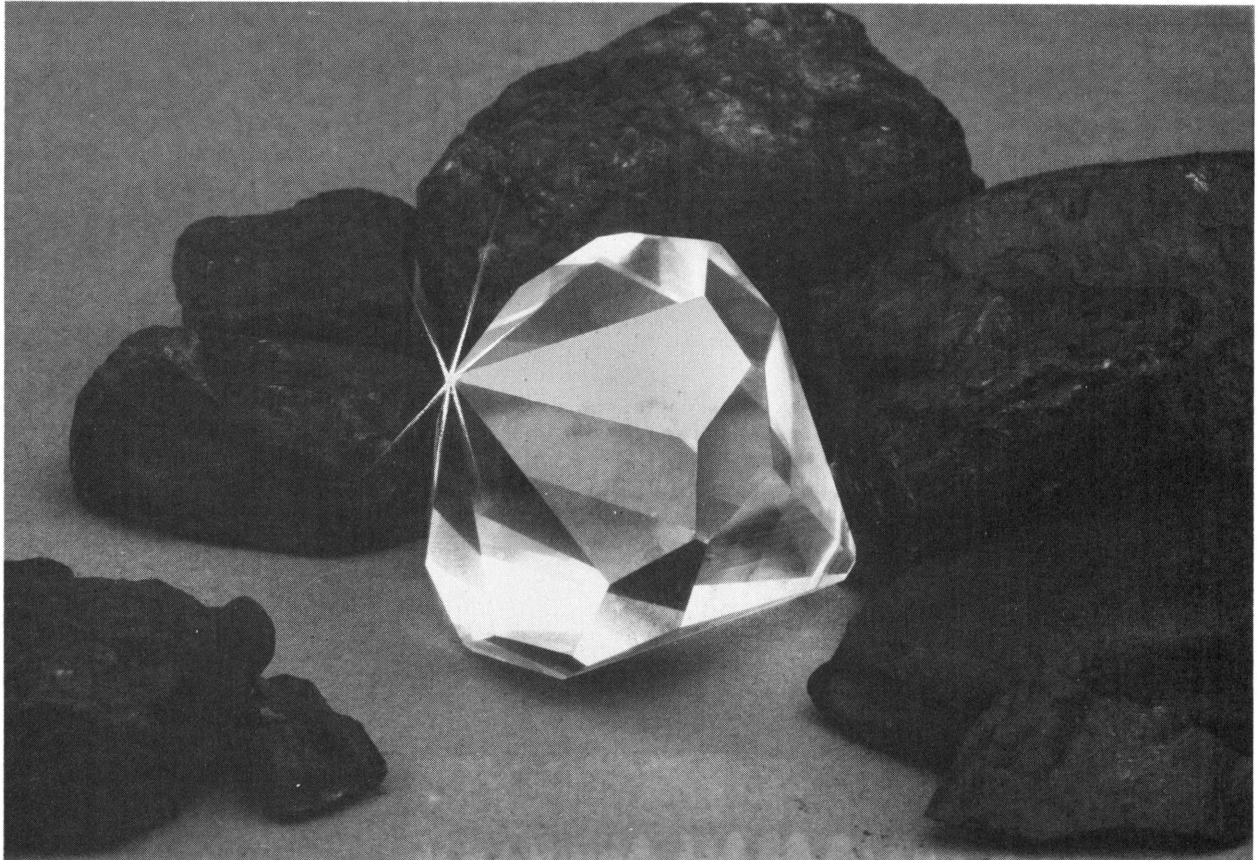
Obviously, such a yarn requires large doses of charm, technical skill and the correct dose of special visual effects. The latter are of prestigious quality and were nominated for Oscars, though critics chose to pooh-pooh most of the remaining merits of the film.

Dennis Muren, supervisor of visual effects; Kit West, supervisor of special effects; John Ellis, opticals; and David Allen, stop motion supervisor, all from ILM's magic shoppe, were nominated for the effects in *Young Sherlock* which were immaculately unobtrusive, but effective to a story which concerned itself with suspense and adventure.

Ellis' opticals had deliberately softer matte edges and blurs were encouraged. Go-motion, a faster version of stop-motion animation, was used to also blur puppet movements in various sequences. According to Ellis, "... if you look at the harpies (metallic figures which come to life and do great damage) over a light table, you'd notice that in some frames, the wings are gone completely. They are moving so fast, there is no longer any picture information ..."

The Stained Glass Man was among the more dramatic effects. The figure of a knight imprisoned in a stained glass window, suddenly frees itself and advances upon a horror-stricken priest, brandishing its sword. This was accomplished with the use of computer graphics and a "glint" program to give it life. According to Muren, "We devised a lighting program that would correspond to actual stage lighting. Most computer graphics have three light sources, a front key light, a fill side light, and maybe a back rim light. Those sources could be moved around. Being a cameraman, I knew we'd need a lot more than

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that. Additional lighting allows you to finesse the look of an object — in this case, a computer image. We were intercutting this with actual motion picture lighting." The process that became a startling image on the big screen was tedious, but obviously rewarding.

The scenes with young Watson and his encounter with live pastries was directed by David Allen, stop motion animator, whose work was well-established from such movies as *Caveman*, *When Dinosaurs Rule the Earth* and numerous commercials.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences limits the number of individuals who may accept an award for a designated achievement. However, each production crew is painfully aware that it requires hundreds of helping hands to create and carry out the special effects that enhance a film and win Oscars, even though only a few are permitted to accept the coveted statuettes.

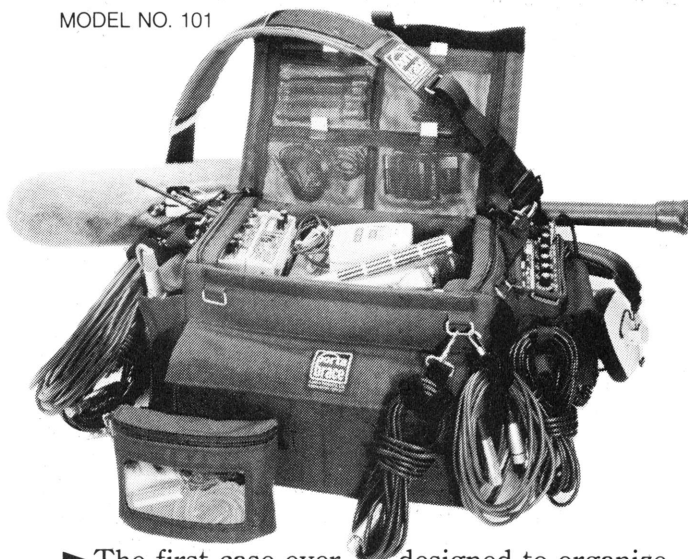
Detailed information on effects work for the nominated films may be found in *American Cinematographer* issues of May, 1985 for *Return to Oz*; December 1985 for *Cocoon*; and March, 1986 for *Young Sherlock Holmes*.

Originally seven films were up for consideration in the special visual effects category. They included *Enemy Mine*, *Life-force*, *Fright Night* and *Back to the Future*. △

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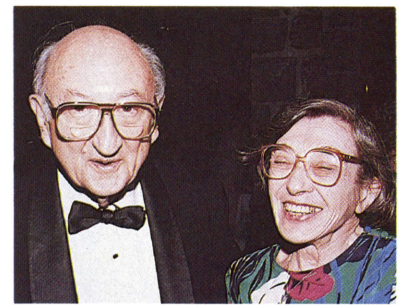
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From the Clubhouse

A Gala Evening

Members of the American Society of Cinematographers gathered at the Bel-Air Country Club January 12 for the 7th Annual Gala Affair. Dancing, conversation, and renewing old friendships were the themes of the evening. However, the high point of the evening was reached when a number of members were honored with plaques from the society for their 1985 awards and nominations. Stanley Cortez presided and Leonard South was chairman for the event attended by some 280 members and guests.



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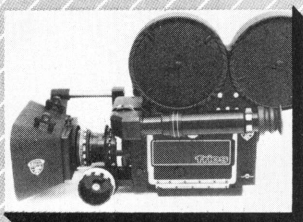
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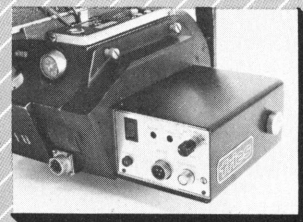
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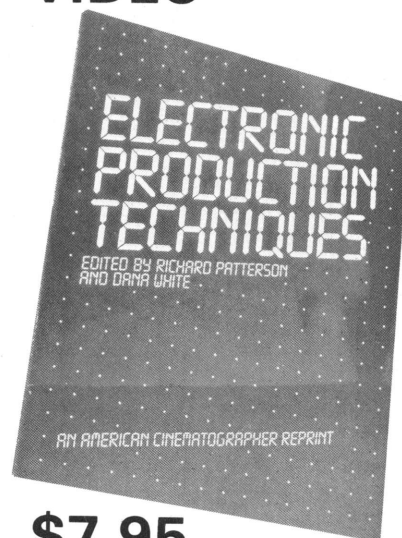
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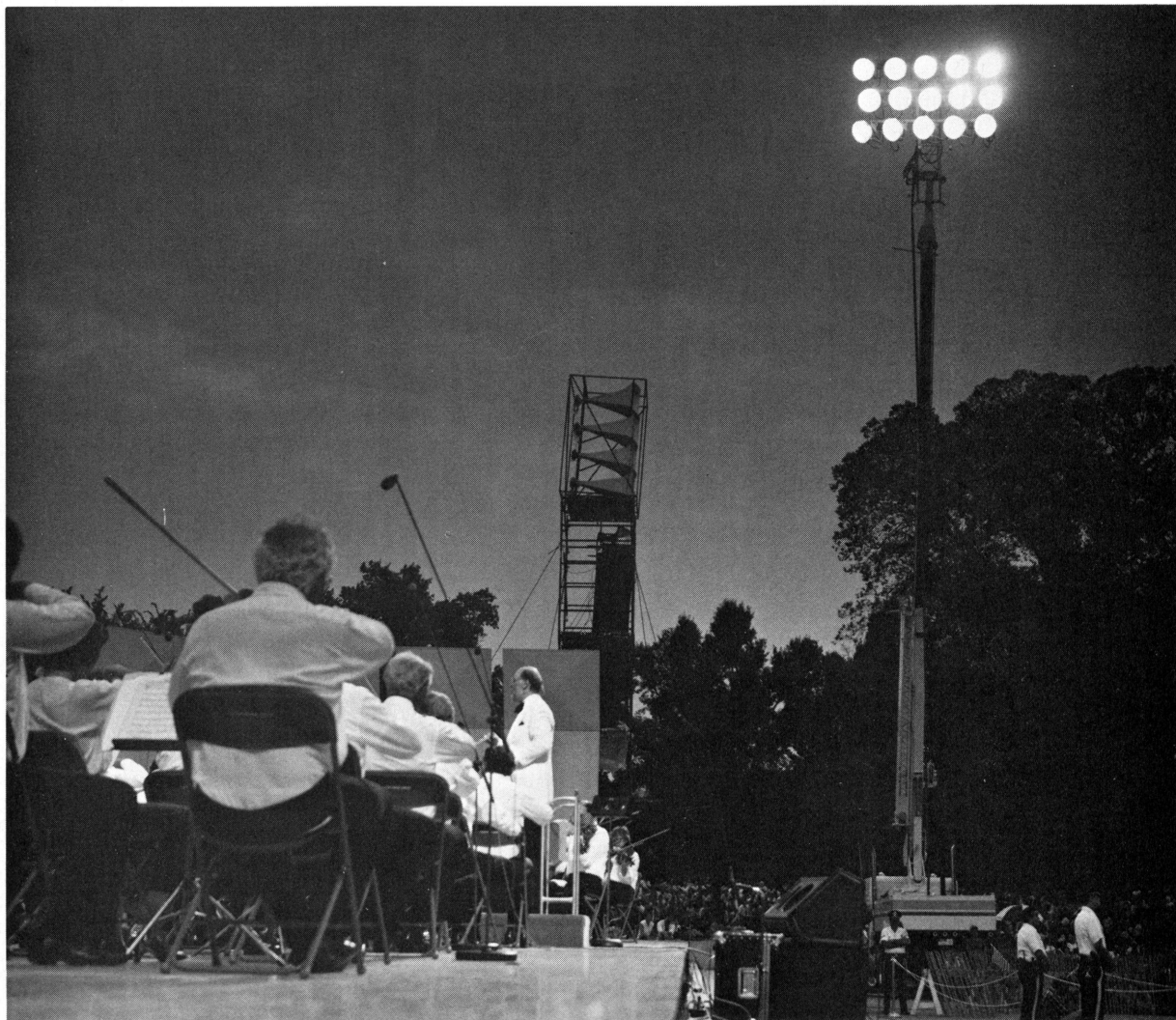


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Scientific or Technical Awards



*Musco Mobile Light
at work*

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognizes technical and scientific achievements within the film industry every year.

Recognizing the value of discovery and innovation toward the advancement of technique, an Academy committee headed by Joseph Westheimer, ASC, carefully examines many new processes, devices and systems.

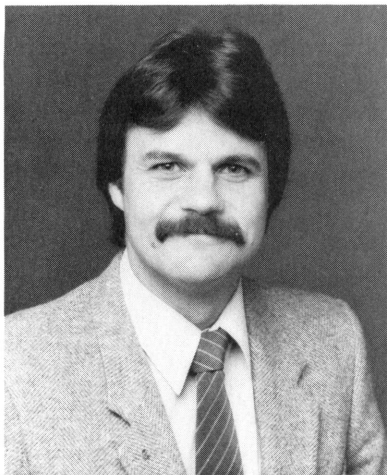
This group sees demonstrations of each candidate and from these considerations, Oscar plaques are awarded:

Larry Barton, designer of the precision speed crystal-controlled device which enabled a film camera to synchronize to a computer or TV monitor without special cabling, was awarded a plaque.

The precision speed control governs exposure rates from one frame-

per second to 50 fps in .001 frame increments. The device makes it possible to synchronize the film camera to the scan rate of electronic monitors and can also be applied to accommodate phasing problems in order to eliminate flicker.

Barton has had 17 years experience as an engineer in the industry. He established Cinematography Elec-



Larry Barton

tronics, Inc., in 1976 and is credited with many innovative designs including 16SR speed control, HMI and TV crystal control, remote camera controls and stabilized camera mounts.

Harrison & Harrison, optical engineers, have been honored for the invention and development of Harrison diffusion filters for motion picture photography. A longtime Hollywood establishment, the company moved to Porterville, California several years ago, where it continues to produce filters under the leadership of Hank Harrison.

Harrison diffusion filters combine a transparent plate which has a pitted surface, with a light-transmissive material of neutral density. This efficiently eliminates halation and veiling. The photographed image is thus enhanced with a controllable amount of diffusion, extending the range of textures available to cinematographers.

Alan Landaker, who previously shared an Oscar plaque for engineering a 24-frame color video system, was awarded a new prize for the 1984 Mark III camera drive.

Landaker, who is employed by The Burbank Studios, began his career in the motion picture industry in 1965. Upon returning from service in Vietnam, he resumed his career at 20th Century Fox and subsequently at Columbia Pictures. He is now employed by the Burbank Studios as chief engineer and assistant sound director.

The Mark III camera drive permits synchronization and phasing of motion picture cameras with computers, television monitors, other cameras and

sound recording equipment. Cameras can also be operated manually for off-speed special effects or phase-locked with process projection equipment, eliminating the need for distributors, special motors and associated cables.

A scientific and engineering award was made to **Imax Systems Corporation** for a method of filming and exhibiting high fidelity, large format, wide angle motion pictures.

Integral to the process for presenting cinema programs in the Imax or Omnimax format is the rolling loop projector, developed from a film transport mechanism and originally invented by Peter R.W. Jones. Improvements made on that patent by the Imax Systems Corporation and the development of other peripheral equipment, made



Alan Landaker

possible the high-speed, horizontal projection of 70mm pictures, 15 perforations per frame, onto screens of unusually large proportions in theaters designed to specifications for optimum viewing of those motion pictures.

Currently playing at Toronto's Ontario Place Cinesphere in Canada, two feature length films about America's space shuttle program are being shown in the Imax format. *Hail Columbia* and *The Dream Is Alive*, shown in succession, gave the company an opportunity to test the validity of feature length presentations in large format.

According to company officials, *The Dream Is Alive* was unquestionably the principal attraction. It offered an insider's view of the space shuttle program and features spectacu-

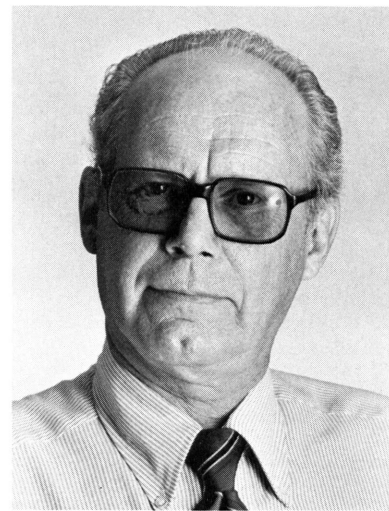
lar in-flight footage shot by the astronauts with the Imax camera.

Ernst Nettmann, also a previous claimant of a Scientific or Technical award for the pitching lens, was honored this year for the invention of the Cam-Remote. **Edward Phillips** and **Carlos DeMattos** of Matthews Studio Equipment, Inc., shared the award for their part in the development of the camera.

The Cam-Remote combines electronic and mechanical pan and tilt apparatus with video viewing, making it possible to photograph scenes while the operator is some distance from the camera. In dangerous situations, the crew is, therefore, not in peril. Limitations imposed by set design or nature can often be overcome by use of the Cam-Remote. It gives the cinematographer additional flexibility while maintaining simultaneous control of all the camera's operating functions.

David W. Spencer received a technical achievement award for the development of an animation photo transfer process (APT). Spencer is a graduate of the School of Modern Photography in New York and was the manager of Disney Studio's still department until July of 1985. He is now employed as account executive at PIC Communications in Burbank.

The concept of animation photo transfer came about early in 1983 as an improvement on the Xerox process which had been in use throughout the animation industry for 25 years. It is a lithographic means of generating



David Spencer

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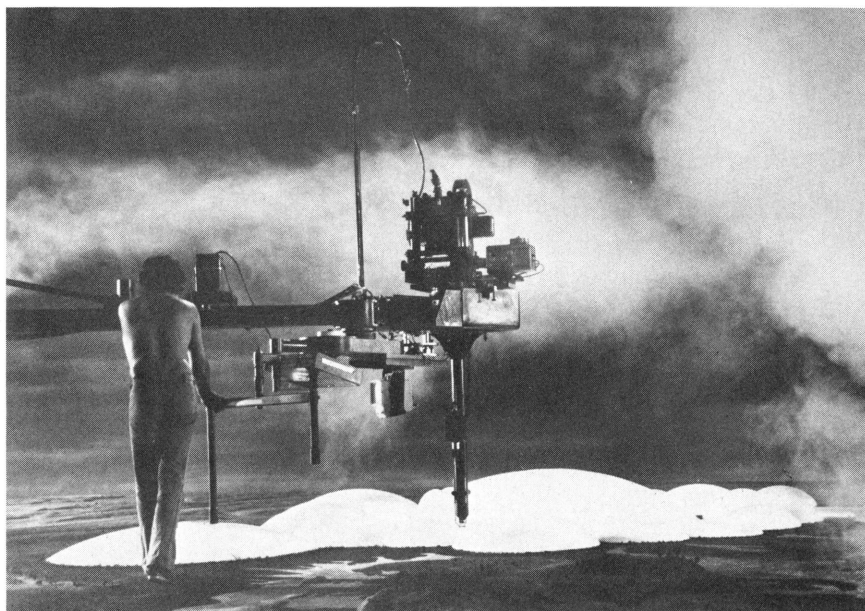


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The APT was used in Disney's, *The Black Cauldron*. (See *American Cinematographer* July, 1985).

Myron Gordin, Joe P. Crookham, Jim Drost and David Crookham of Musco Mobile Lighting, Ltd., won Academy recognition for the invention of a method of transporting adjustable, high-intensity luminaires for application in the production of motion picture films.

The development of Musco's system in 1982 marked the beginning of a new technology in temporary large area lighting. In its first year of operation, the company won an Emmy from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for lighting excellence in live college football broadcasts. Since its early application only to sports events, the lighting system has been successfully used in *All The Right Moves* (1984), *One Magic Christmas* (1985) and the currently filming *Invaders From Mars*.

John H. Whitney, Sr., was honored at the awards dinner on March 16 with a medal of commendation from the Academy for cinematic pioneering.

For more than three decades, Whitney has invented, developed or encouraged the exploration of numerous techniques used in the process of making motion pictures. Prominent among these was his early work in motion controlled cinematography. From his own designs and experiments to the students he has inspired as an instructor, "he has left his mark on the field of visual imagery and the methods employed to achieve them. He will continue to be an inspiration to generations to come," the Academy declared. $\triangle$

Castle in Italy Is Seminar Scene

by Jean Turner

Una Citta Cinema! A liberal translation is "festival of cinema," a "cinema convention" or perhaps "celebration of cinema." Whatever is liberal or literal here is moot. It was, and will be again in 1986, a generous ladling of cinema learning in an atmosphere as unique as any movie set ever contrived.

It all happened in L'Aquila, Italy, in December of 1985. Though it is only five years old, its annual dispensation of the gospel according to cinema is rapidly becoming legend in Europe.

Picture a 16th Century castle, complete with dungeons and torture chambers, artfully decorated with appropriate props from various Italian productions. In several great halls, where Spanish royalty once held forth, seminars were held in cinematography, directing, acting, editing, writing, sound and special effects. Crossing the moat each day to become a part of a seminar was literally like changing centuries to a period production. One truly expected to spy the likes of Errol Flynn leaping from a balustrade, sword in hand.

The city itself is about 100 miles east of Rome, situated on hilltops in the center of a valley surrounded by snow-capped peaks. Brisk weather extended itself through the thick castle walls forcing modern heating methods and electric lights as the only concessions to this century. Except, of course, the television monitors, projection systems and other accoutrements of the current seminars.

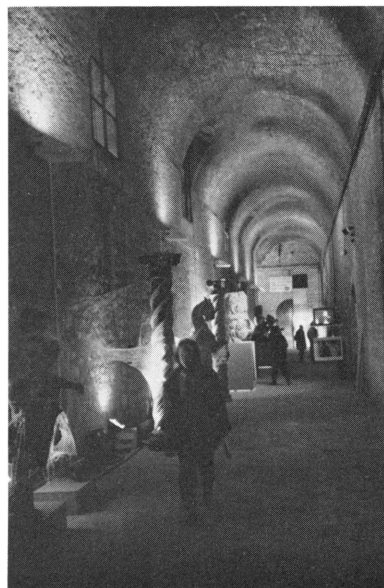
Gabriele Lucci, teacher and author who now devotes his entire career to this annual fete, believes that slowly, but surely, it is this kind of information dispensation which will bestow a heritage of knowledge to filmmakers of the future as well as to help those working now.



L'Aquila, Italy in early morning. Below: Castle is lit for visiting participants.

He had imported talent from everywhere possible to contribute to the seminars. Lucci says that Italian films have lost their originality and those made today (with much financial difficulty) are too often cheap imitations of American or English productions. Cinecitta, Italy's only production studio, must concern itself largely with making commercials, or movies from other countries which come to Italy with money in hand.

The purpose of gathering each year in L'Aquila is to perpetuate interest in filmmaking and to import techniques, but at the same time establish a style uniquely Italian. Italian comedy, for instance, says Lucci, has almost disappeared on film, replaced with poor imitations of American and English humor. Production values are limited, as well, and this is due to strained finances.



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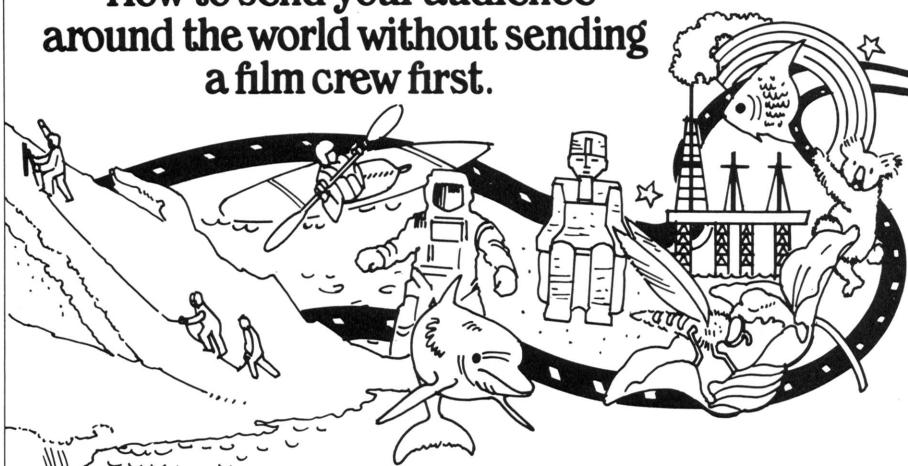
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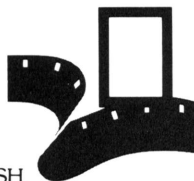
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Money for movie making in Italy, unless it is foreign-injected is scarce. And if the source is foreign then so is the influence.

Before World War I, Italian movies were world leaders with their lengthy and elaborate productions of period stories and historical dramas. Following World War II, the industry flourished with new ideas and a neo-realism that set the pace in other countries. The so-called spaghetti Western was born and became popular. But Westerns of all kinds faded into oblivion and have yet to be re-born—a change that affected Italian production.

But, according to Lucci, the saddest circumstances of the movies in Italy are the lack of cinema schools and a lack of technical knowledge. This, coupled with a lack of financing makes for a very "sick" business.

He does not lament the situation to excess. His fervor lies in the optimism of change for the better. The festival in L'Aquila is dedicated to imparting knowledge and help comes from around the world.

Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC, lighted a cathedral to demonstrate film lighting technique. John Bailey, ASC, spoke at several sessions about cinematography with emphasis on the Western. Jeff Fahey and Marilu Henner, American actors, talked to overflow crowds about working on the set.

Agnes Guillemot, famous French editor for Francois Truffaut, was there, as were Luciano Tovoli, Italian cinematographer, Maria Schneider, German actress and dozens of others who shared their expertise.

The fire in Lucci's heart for his country's movie industry centers around education. He believes poor quality, indifferent scripts and antiquated production techniques can all be overcome with learning saturation for the young, imparted by "their elders." Italy is full of genius, but genius flees to France, England, the USA and Yugoslavia to make movies because the film business is so inadequate in Italy.

Lucci may be right, but whatever Italy lacks otherwise, it is certainly endowed with location backgrounds. Not only do ready made sets for such colossi as *Ben Hur* and *Quo Vadis*

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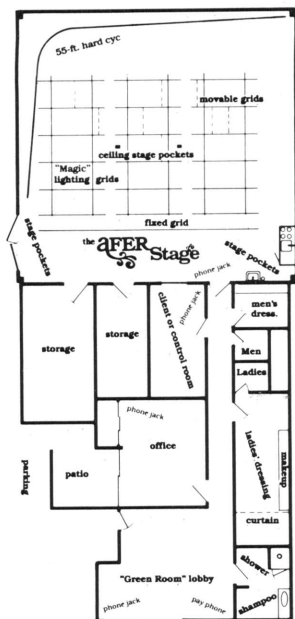
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abound, but Western prairies, snow-capped backgrounds, quaint medieval villages, modern ski resorts are everywhere, along with romantic seascapes and islands of every ilk. Italy is one vast movie set and with all else being equal the visitor is disappointed to find no arcs in the streets and no Arriflex cameras on Tulip cranes soaking up the atmosphere.

That is not to say that movies are not made in Italy. They are. But, says Lucci, "they are rarely Italian. And if they are very good, they are never Italian."

Lucci and the festival are young. Each year, the seminars expand. Each year there is more interest throughout Europe.

If enthusiasm makes the world go round, then Gabriele Lucci and his helpers have a head start on the renovation of Italian cinema. Knowledge is the arbiter in all aspects of worldwide endeavor and cinema is no exception. That it should emanate from the halls and dungeons and the dry moat of a 16th Century castle in Italy is a delightful irony in itself. △

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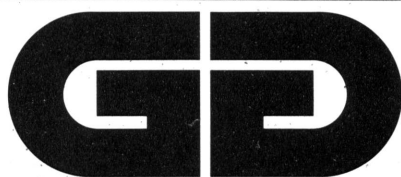
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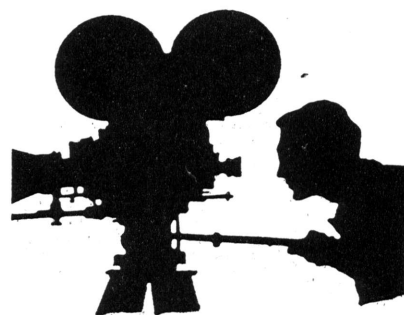
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In the months to come in *American Cinematographer*, we will be writing about "Top Gun," a picture filled with daring cinematography and unusual special effects which combine to reveal flying fighter planes as a dangerous way to serve one's country.

In the May issue, Jacques Marquette, ASC, talks about photographing "North and South, Book II" for television.



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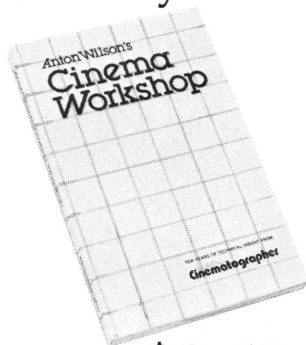
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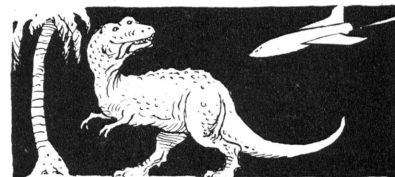
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Production Atmosphere for *Miami Vice*

By Glenn Gillis

Singer Phil Collins
on set of
Miami Vice



On a beat of hot white sidewalks, Art Deco boulevards, and seamy Cartagena alleys, TV detectives Sonny Crockett and Ricardo Tubbs dodge in and out of the shadows of the Metro-Dade underground, mixing with Florida's fair-weather criminals. *Miami Vice*, a Friday night series airing on NBC, is breaking all the rules of the prime time TV series. And it already has imitators.

Shot in and around Miami, the series has an on-location realism all its own that borrows from the Cuban emigration and from the leisurely living of the Caribbean drug trade. The colors filling the screen are carefully selected – corals, key limes, aquas, pinks – all native to the coastal city. Cut to a fast-moving play list of rock hits, each episode of *Miami Vice* is

shot like a feature film, but in seven days.

A production of The Michael Mann Company and Univeral Television, *Miami Vice* is the first in a new breed of television series that is in love with production, packing big screen style into a television aspect ratio. At last year's Emmy technical awards ceremony, *Miami Vice* took the 1985 prizes for best cinematography, art direction, and sound editing, setting standards in each area.

A number of cinematographers have had a hand in crafting the look that characterizes the action adventure series, all working closely with executive producer Michael Mann. While cinematographer Bill Collins called the shots on the pilot film, A.J. "Duke"

Callahan went on to shoot one half of the 1984–85 season. He was succeeded midway through the season by director of photography Jim Contner who shot much of the 85–86 season, ending on "Junk Love."

"It is without doubt the most difficult thing that I've ever shot," says Contner of the series. "We try to do feature-quality work, and we do it in a week." Contner was quick to adapt to the guerilla production tactics that allow the show to move onto five locations daily with 50 to 60 set-ups. Improvisation is quite often what brings the shows in on time.

Contner came to Miami with a feel for the city where he'd gotten his schooling as an undergrad at the University of Miami. It wasn't exactly as he'd



Crew set for shot, utilizing Arri 6kW HMI lights. Below: Johnson on location in Miami under sunlight so bright it requires two fill lights.



remembered it though, with much of the Miami Beach area giving way to urban decay. As Contner sees it, the city and the production crew have struck a very happy working relationship.

Miami Vice is the best travel brochure a city could ask for. Contner's camera takes in vistas of backstreets and shorefront, from Coconut Grove to Key Biscayne, giving the city as much screen time as either of the show's stars. Says one of the series directors, "Miami, which at first resisted the show, has now opened its arms to it because the series has actually up-

graded the image of Miami. Everybody thinks of the city as being a pretty slick place now."

The look of the series had been blueprinted before Contner arrived. The changes he made were subtle at first as he opted to dolly the camera more for a kinetic kind of coverage. His signature though, has been the moody, chiascuro lighting. The look, he says, is adopted largely from the work of Guiseppe Rotunno, ASC, who broke Contner in as an operator on *All That Jazz*. "Many of the pictures that I had done prior to *Vice* were very dramatic looking," says Contner, "with heavy shadows, very heavy contrast. That was the look that (executive producer) Michael Mann wanted for the show – the play of very bright against very dark with a lot of pastel color."

Contner's first motion picture credit as director of photography was William Friedkin's *Cruising*. The director offered Contner the opportunity to shoot his first film as cinematographer after he had operated on Friedkin's earlier picture *The Brinks' Job*.

Since then, Contner has switched styles constantly, trying light comedy, period looks and new technology. Among his credits as director of photography now are Garry Marshall's *Flamingo Kid*, Sylvester Stallone's *Night Hawks*, and *Jaws 3D*.

Miami Vice, as Contner observes, owes much of its success to its emphasis on production values. Moving off the backlots of Hollywood gave the series a grittiness that set it apart from other police dramas. (Mann was involved as a writer on the television series' *Starsky and Hutch* and *Police Story*). But it is the color-coded mandate put forth by Mann that originally framed the look of the show. One of the show's directors, Jim Johnston, who has now directed three episodes explains: "Michael Mann wanted *Miami Vice* to stand out as a different-looking television show and he set three dictums to accomplish that."

"First, he defined the look of the show," says Johnston, a Manhattan commercial director and principal of Johnston Films. "We're not allowed to use earth tones – no reds, oranges, or browns – so that the show has a very cool look. Marshall McLuhan was right when he said that television was a 'cool' medium," Johnston explains, "The lime greens, the pinks, and the blues not only represent the colors of South Florida but they transmit very well on television."

"The second thing that Mann made clear was that he didn't want to use any writers or directors who had done episodic TV before." Johnston continues, "They tend to be formula

guys and that's exactly what he didn't want. Mann looked in other places for directors, finding documentary filmmakers, low budget filmmakers, and directors who've done work on the stage." *Vice's* other directors have ranged from sci-fi director Abel Ferrara (*Fear City*, *Driller Killer*) to Rob Cohen (*Small Circle of Friends*).

"Third," says Johnston, "he defined the way that the show would operate. Almost all other television shows are done in the backlots of Los Angeles on semi-regular hours – seven working days, 12–13 hours apiece. On *Miami Vice* you shoot 18-hour days and that means that you're out there at three in the morning. You're almost behind from the moment you start."

The location-heavy schedule meant a lot of surprises for Contner who as director of photography, worked closer to the line than anyone. One day he and his crew would shoot at Jose Marti Park, the next at Vizcaya, a mansion turned museum in Key Biscayne. With no preproduction or lighting days, Contner would send a gaffer and an electrician out to size up his locations. "Each locale dictates its own variances in style," says Contner. "You can't always plan all the subtleties that you would in feature work in terms of lighting, but I was constantly trying to think of new ways to retain a certain stylistic consistency that I would do on a more obvious level in a feature." Rather than going in for a lot of flat lighting we always opted for mood – contrast and deep shadows, half-lit faces. I tried to go for heavy backlight when I could justify it, giving a lot of separation. I use lots of color in the lighting – rose, blue, and yellow gels." Says Johnston, "There are many shows that are tied to logic, that make it very clear where the light is coming from and why. On *Vice* we're not so tied to logic. We'll simply wash a wall in pink light – that makes no sense ordinarily but it's just part of our look."

When Contner started the 85–86 season, one of the first things that he did was to change the lighting package. Callahan had used carbon arcs. Contner replaced them with Arri HMIs, including two of the first Arriflex 12KWs to be used in the United States, all provided by Unique Producer's Service in Miami. "The actors really appre-

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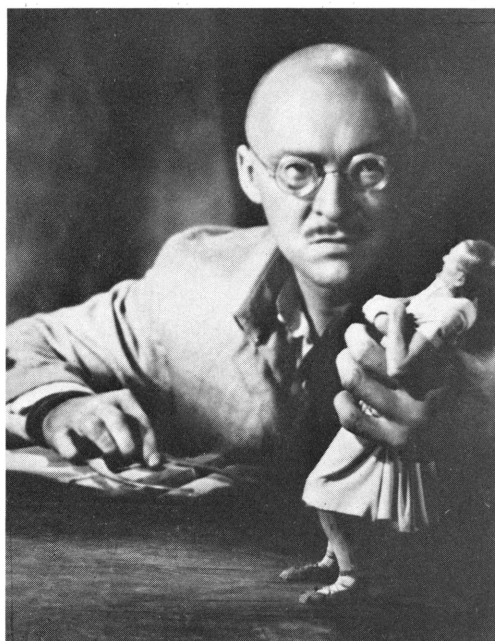
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ciate the 12KW package because they're such cool-running lights," says Johnston. "When we were using the nine lights they had to be brought in so close that they actually gave the actors sunburn." For Contner, using the HMI package made things simpler on interiors, exteriors, and nighttime shoots. "This year I used strictly HMI lights and I'm very happy with the Arriflex 12KW's," he says. "They put out as much light as a brute. By using just one kind of light, we saved a lot of time. Last year I used brutes, but decided that because of the time spent running both AC and DC power I was better off just going with AC."

During the production of the average episode, the equipment is rolled out on location five to six days a week. "It has to be rugged" observes J.B. Jones, a former marine who runs Unique Producer's Service as well as coordinating pyrotechnics for the series. Jones's special effects resume includes the exploding golf course scenes in *Caddy Shack*.

Contner takes chances with his lighting – it's not always based on television's dependence on cheery keys. "Traditionally all networks and studios wanted to see exactly what's on the TV screen," he explains, "specifically what's in the shadows. They want everything lit. But, we aren't afraid to go dark and leave things to the imagination – to really go for the mood of a scene." Contner's concern in lighting was to create a sense of mystique, and to do this he frequently backlit the actors using kickers with pink or yellow gels to balance the light.

The *Vice* crew is up all night every Friday shooting all over Metro-Dade, sometimes using available street lighting and other times building elaborate constructions to light up to five city blocks. The 12KW's take a nightshift too. "They're terrific," says Johnston, "because you can roll them out so fast." Contner shot almost all of his scenes with Kodak 5294. "You have to be very careful with the film," he says. "Many people think that you can rate it up to 1,000 if not more. I find that it goes very grainy and you start to lose your blacks. They begin milking out, going toward the gray spectrum so I rate it very conservatively, underexpos-

ing one or two stops as I see fit to retain rich blacks.

"We've done many car chase sequences with fast lenses, although whenever I could, I would light," says Contner, "because at night we worked with lots of neon which is very hot and I don't like it to burn out. I shot it stopped down to between three and four so that there was no loss of color or sharpness." Contner often relied on available light to film nighttime car chases, planting just enough light in the car to illuminate the actors' faces."

Strong contrast is a key ingredient in *Miami Vice*, and it runs throughout Michael Mann's work, Contner points out, as well as his own. "If you look at the films that he's directed (the feature *Thief*, and *The Jericho Mile* for television), you'll see that he likes a dark, somber look as well as dark foreboding stories. He has a dark side to him and he tends to light things on the screen like that."

The southern Miami climate is unpredictable, and *Miami Vice* is an exercise in exteriors. Matching light was a constant challenge to Contner and he wasn't always satisfied with the way the pieces went together. "The trouble with television is that you've got to make that schedule and it's tough to do the show in seven days as it is without taking a lot of time out to worry about matching the lighting." But still with a show so heavy on exteriors, Contner couldn't help but spend a lot of time worrying. Says Johnston, "In August, it's like Cambodia down there. You can't stop the actors from sweating - the make-up blots and runs - we let them sweat which lends a gritty, realistic edge to the show. One minute it'll be raining and then it'll clear up. The weather changes are compensated for in that sometimes you'll get these gorgeous skies with decks of cumulus clouds. But matching the light is quite a problem." Says Contner, "You start a scene in bright sunlight and you finish it up in clouds. The big decision to be made is 'do we wait it out or do we run off to the studio cover set?'"

The colors that Contner catches aren't all native to Miami - a swing crew of six painters will often change the look of a location. "We'll come in, repaint a room in an hour, and before the paint's dry, we've left," says

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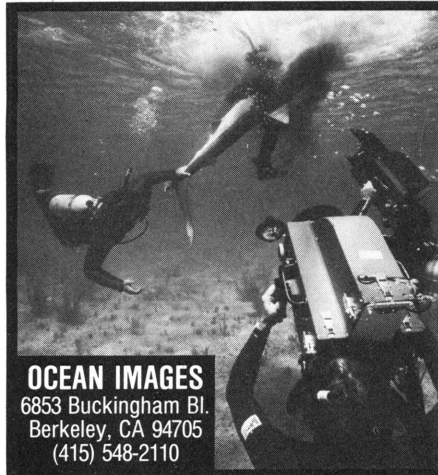
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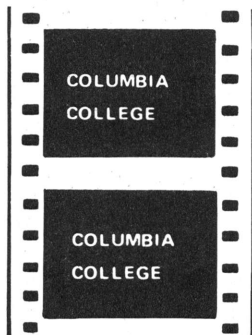
Johnston. When filming a complicated boat chase on the water, Contner and his operator Ricky Bravo would often shoot and print a rehearsal just to stay on schedule.

The cinematography on *Miami Vice* may well redefine the way that cameras cover TV heros and plot twists. "We would very rarely shoot conventional masters of scenes," says Contner. "A master might start out as a wide shot and we'd let the actors walk into the tighter coverage or we'd dolly into tighter coverage. (Many feature films and television shows will shoot a whole scene in a master or wide shot and then go in for close coverage). That way, we'd always be changing the background, dollying around the actors and setting up a certain tension within a scene – the tension that you get from moving the camera around constantly," says Contner, who likes to see the actors wander in and out of their own coverage.

The series uses exteriors from sidewalks to the Everglades, but at least one or two days a week the crew sets up inside pricey mansions or backstreet clubs. Contner cites a true worst case scenario when the crew finds itself in a large bar with low ceilings. "There's no place to hide a light and the director decides that he wants to do a 300 degree pan of the room so we're all trying to adapt photo floodlights to ceiling sockets," says Contner. "You have to be inventive, spur of the moment.

"It's very difficult to light something right the first time," Contner admits. Between takes he's prone to making small changes. "I'm a believer in going into a set and trying to find a real light source to key from," he says. "I don't always stay true to that but it gives me a justification for a light source – whether it's a window or a lamp." Contner intentionally increased the use of backlight on the show, adding kickers colored for mood.

It's rare that actors have to compete with the camera, Contner observes, but it happens from time to time on *Vice*. "You've got to keep the acting and the camera moves interesting while allowing the actors to perform. Often, because the show is so concerned with style, the actors feel boxed in, sometimes complaining that we haven't



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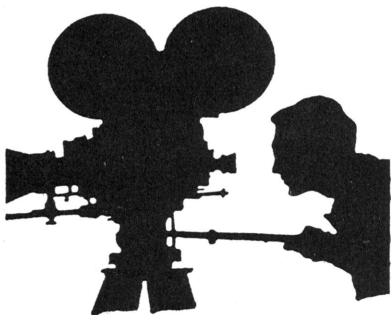
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given them enough freedom to do what they want to within a scene. We've tried to give them as much freedom as we could while maintaining enough control to retain the style of the show. That has become quite a problem."

After leaving the series early in the fall, Contner joined director Stuart Rosenberg on the Mexican locations of *Let's Get Harry*, a Tri-Star release. True to form, he has blueprinted a new style of shooting for the feature film. "It's a different look from *Miami Vice*, both in terms of style and color. For that matter it's different from any of the pictures that I've done," says Contner. For this project, set in remote jungle locations, Contner finds himself using more Steadicam and more long lenses. "I'm trying to shoot more with available light than I have in the past. The camera work is also looser."

"On feature pre-production," Contner says, "you often fall into a pattern that's in place when you get to the actual shooting day. You become inflexible because of the thoroughness of your plans. Because of the intense experience of shooting *Miami Vice* now I'll have a different approach to features - I'll be a lot more open-minded when I get on the set." △

Glenn Gillis is a freelance writer based in New York.



Things to Come . . .

In the months ahead American Cinematographer will cover features such as *Legal Eagle*, *Red Dragon* and *Jumping Jack Flash*.

We will be writing about component matting for television production; new experiments with high definition television and a report on "Faerie Tale Theatre" produced on tape.

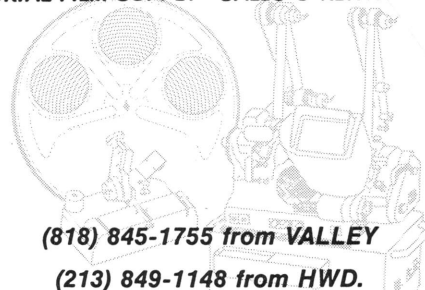
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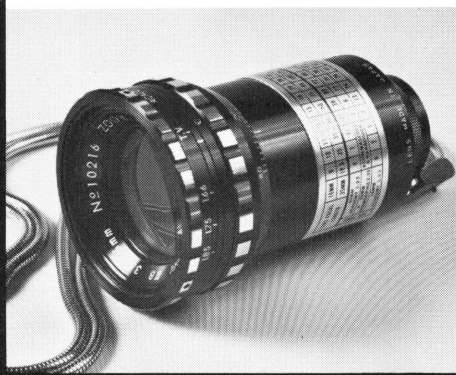


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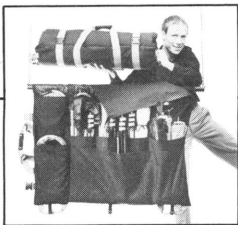
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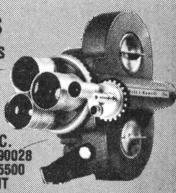
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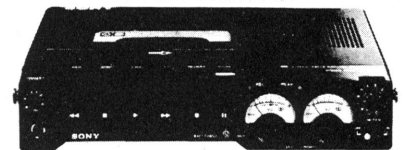
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Advertiser Index

Aaton: 100
Agfa-Gevaert: 20
Alan Gordon: 120, 122, 125,
15, 48, 60
Alpha Cine Lab: 111
Arriflex: 23, 40
A/T Scharff: 111
Atlanta Film Equip: 110
Audio Services: 4, 119
BERC: 45
BandPro Film/Video C-3
Barbizon: 108
Bellevue Pathe: 124
Birns & Sawyer: 25, 119, 127
Brooks Inst: 115

CECO: 18
CEI Technology: 105
Camera Mart: 49
Camera Svc: 11
Carpenter: 121, 123
Century Precision: 57
Chambless: 121
Christy's Ed Supplies: 119
Cine 60: 6
Cine Sound 5: 121
Cine South: 121
Cineflex: 109

Cinema Prods: 83
Cinematography Electronics:
62
Cinequipt: 118
Clairmont Camera: 8
Colt Helicopter: 6
Columbia College: 118
Connell (Skycam): 121

Deluxe labs: 27
Desmar Corp: 48
Dreamlight Images: 120
Du Art: 17

Eastman Kodak: 5
Egripment: 62
Elemack: 22
Energy Productions: 122
Engineering Model Assocs:
121
Excalibur: 46

Focal Press: 26
Frezzolini: 46
Fries: 102

GTE Sylvania: 69
Gasser: 10

General Camera West: C/2
General Camera: 1
Great American Market: 16
Greative Black Book: 64

Harrison: 112

Image Devices: 121
International Film: 102

JBK Cinequipt: 120
JK Camera Eng: 28
Jordan Klein: 70

K&H Products: 96
KB Systems: 123
KEM: 72
Knox, David: 4
Koch Creative Enterprises: 69

LTM Corp.: 87
Larry Edmunds: 123
Laumic Co.: 110
Lee Filters: 59
Lee Lighting: 95
Lee/Belden: 63
Light Wave: 10
Lipsiner, Mitchell: 127

London Intl.: 117
Lowel Light: 2

MacGillivray-Freeman: 123
Matthews: 79
McConkey: 97
Merkel: 124
Mitchell Camera: 19
Mole-Richardson: 121
Multi-Track Magnetics: 24

NCE of Florida: 121
Nalpak: 120
National Geog: 108
New Mexico Film: 96
Newsfilm: 123
Norris Film: 119

O'Connor: 70
Ocean Images: 118
Optical Textile: 77
Otto Nemenz: 61

Palmer Films: 115
Plume Ltd.: 120

Rafik: 121, 123
Roessel Cine Photo: 117

Rosco: 12
Rycote: 24

SMS Productions: 123
Saxon Media Equipment: 122
Seitz Tech Products: 126
Sennheiser: 78
Siemens: 97
Steady-Film: 28
Steenbeck: 71
Stevens Engineering: 123
Super 8 Sound: 125

Techno Cine/Video: 78
Tiffen Optical: 91

Ulland: 7
Ultravision: 79

Victor Duncan: 47

Whitehouse: 110, 122
Williams: 121

Yale Labs: 123
Zellan: C/4

In Memoriam

Olle Comstedt, ASC, died in Denmark Oct. 21, 1985, according to word received here last month. He was 83.

Comstedt, a Swedish cinematographer of note, was the first Scandinavian member of the A.S.C. He was a "gold card" member of 39 years.

From 1936 to 1939, Comstedt was director of photography on several major Swedish features including *Stackars Millionärer*, *Spoket på Bragehus*, *To Levende og en Dod*, *Haxnatten* (Signe Hasso's first film) and *Midnattsolens Son*.

In recognition of his achievements with color in Sweden, he was honored with a fellowship from the American Scandinavian Foundation to study in America. He arrived just before the outbreak of World War II and joined the staff of the motion picture research laboratory of Eastman in Rochester, NY. During the war Comstedt produced many documentaries for the State Department which were distributed mostly in South America. His documentary work about Sweden and Denmark became famous the world over and established him as one of the finest in the use of color photography.

When photographing skiing in Lapland, he would balance himself on a native dog-drawn pulka (a narrow, low sled) or shoot from the shoulder with his camera while zooming over the Arctic snows on skis. His documentary work took him around the world and he became skilled in tropical and aerial cinematography as well as special effects, glass shots and even micro photography. He had been an editor and writer, and was an expert in laboratory work in film.

Comstedt graduated from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm in 1930 and spoke fluently in six



languages. He was vitally interested in the coordination of Swedish and American motion picture techniques. "Sweden is a small country, but I think that you will agree that of all the people of Europe, the Swedes are probably the most akin to Americans in outlook and this is particularly true in the motion picture arts," he once wrote to Daniel B. Clark, president of the American Society of Cinematographers.

"Swedish cinematographers want to keep in close touch with developments in this country because they feel, as you do, that a special kinship exists between such craftsmen. My membership in the A.S.C. will help to strengthen that link."

In 1972, he retired from work as a cinematographer and eventually moved to Vedbaek, Denmark, where he died. He has no known survivors. △

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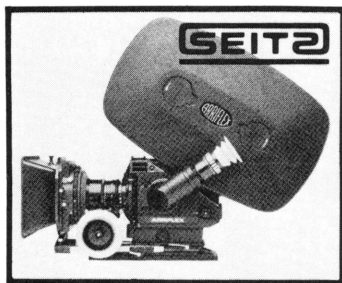
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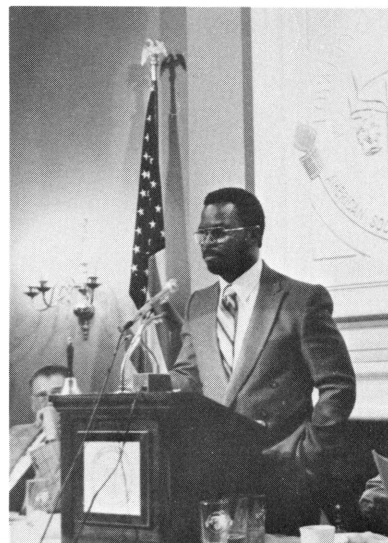
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In Memoriam

Dr. Ronald Erwin McNair, a veteran astronaut and an honorary member of the ASC, died with five other crew members and a school teacher in the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger on January 28. The nation was stunned by the tragedy, which occurred within one minute after what had appeared to be a perfect launch at Kennedy Space Center, Florida. McNair was 35 and is survived by his wife, Cheryl, and two children, Reginald, 3, and Joy, 1.

McNair was born and raised in Lake City, North Carolina. He was named a Presidential Scholar from 1967 to 1971, when he earned his bachelor of science degree in physics at North Carolina A & T State University. He received his Ph.D. in Physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1976. He was a Ford Foundation Fellow in 1971–74, a National Fellowship Fund Fellow in 1974–75, and a NATO Fellow in 1975. While at MIT he developed some of the earliest chemical HF/DF and high pressure CO lasers. He then spent a year in the Los Angeles area while working as a staff physicist doing laser research at Hughes Research Laboratories in Malibu. He became a member of the Trinity Baptist Church of Los Angeles, where he was a Bible student and active church worker during 1977.

In January of 1978 he was selected by NASA to become a member of the eighth group of astronauts. He completed NASA's one year training and evaluation period in August 1979. On shuttle flight 41-B he was mission specialist in charge of the deployment of two satellites and operator of the RMS (Remote Manipulation System). Afterward, he and his wife returned to Los Angeles for a ceremony in his honor at Trinity Baptist. He then made a speechmaking tour of area schools.



On the evening of September 24, 1984, McNair and another astronaut, Captain Bruce McCandless II were initiated as honorary members of the American Society of Cinematographers at a dinner meeting at the clubhouse. As the first men to record motion pictures of outer space activities, they rank among the pioneers of cinematography. The films were shot with two Arriflex 35III cameras during space mission 41B, which was conducted aboard the ill-fated Challenger. The spectacularly beautiful footage, which includes the first space walk without the use of a safety belt and a sequence showing the utilization of the cargo bay remote arm for removing ice from the outside of the shuttle craft and to deploy satellites, made cinematographic history. The two astronauts narrated the films, which reflected a remarkable clarity and professionalism, and chatted with the overflow crowd into the night.

Dr. McNair's hobbies were music and martial arts. He played saxophone in jazz groups and held five regional black belt karate championships. △



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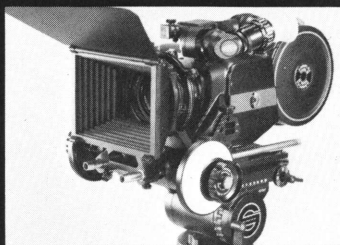
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